Happy Birthday to us! We celebrate our 50th issue in style!

Volume 5 • Issue 2 • January 2000

PS Extreme

THE PLAYER'S UNOFFICIAL MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE PLAYSTATION

#50

TOY STORY 2

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PlayStation

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located somewhere
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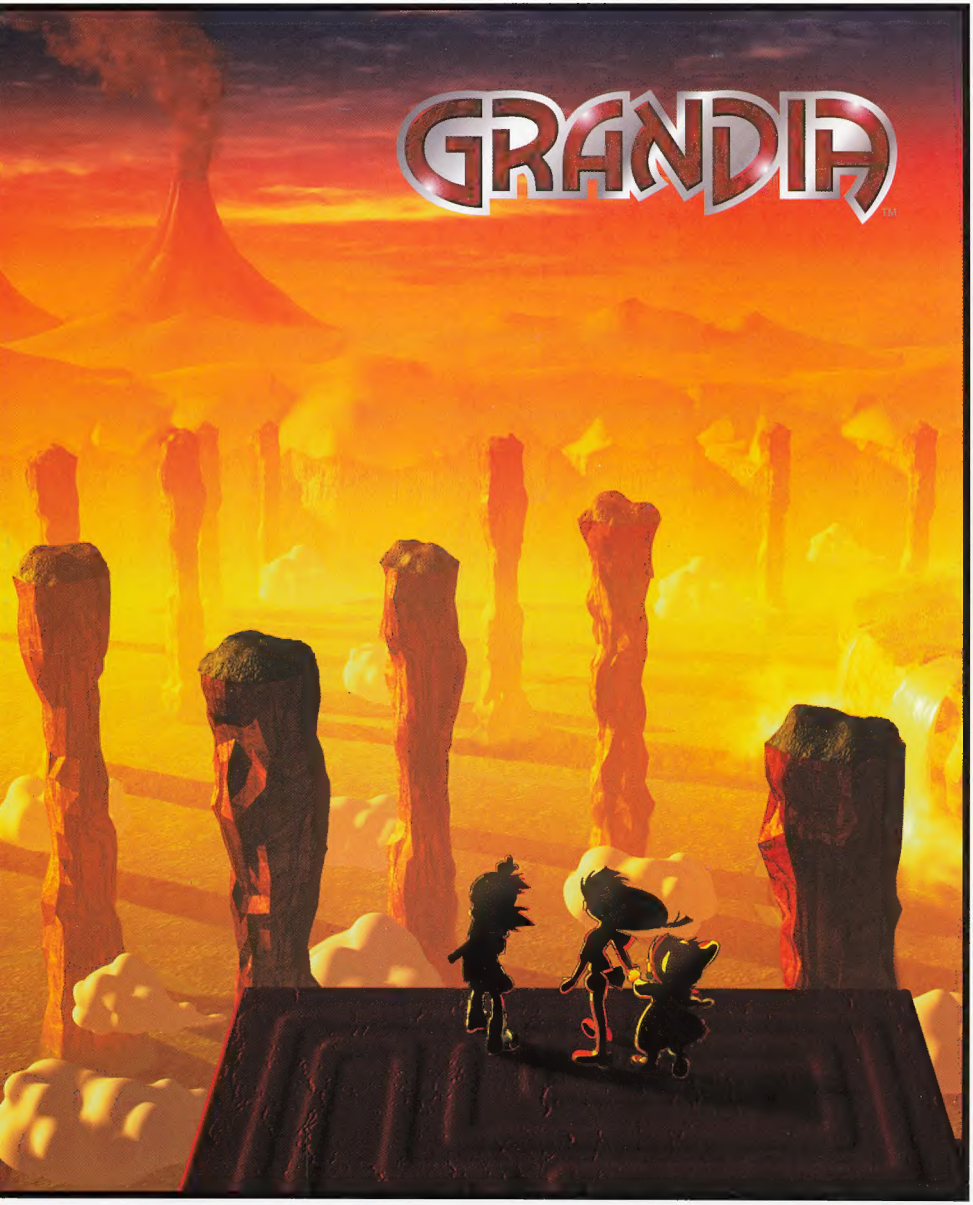
GAME ARTS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VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 2
JANUARY 2000

EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

GREG OFF
OFF@QUAKE.NET

I'm sure from all of the fancy hoopla on the cover, you've gathered that it's our 50th issue. While that might not be a big deal to you, to us it's quite an accomplishment. While the other publishing companies either dipped their feet in the PlayStation pool to see if there was a market, or played follow-the-leader after one had been firmly established, we embraced the PlayStation from the very beginning. The decision to do PSExtreme was not so much a business prospect as it was a fun endeavor that would allow a crazy bunch of avid, hard-core and downright fanatical video gamers to get to play and write about one of the most amazing console systems ever produced. The fact that we've been able to get away with it for almost five years is a testament to just how far we'll go to play games such as CTR: Crash Team Racing, Pac-Man World, Gran Turismo 2, Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, etc., before they hit the shelves. In any event, we're happy that you've been along for the ride and, hopefully, you'll stick around for the next 50, because things are just starting to get interesting.

Besides being #50, this issue marks our fourth annual PSExtreme Awards. The ballots have been collected and tabulated and the winners announced. Turn to page 30 to find out the results. The voting was done by the Dimension Publishing staff along with our freelancers, and all of the games had to have been reviewable at the time of voting. There were some tough choices in some of the categories, but the decision for Game of the Year was pretty much unanimous.

Some of the other goodies in this issue include a self-serving PSExtreme quiz — test your knowledge of the magazine, its history and the goofballs that make it, first looks at Namco's Ace Combat 3 and EA's Road Rash: Jailbreak, new PS2 screens, an in-depth cover feature on Activision/Disney's Toy Story 2 and a whopping 24 game reviews.

Well, as usual, thank you for reading the magazine. Our success is in no small part due to you, our faithful readers. Please don't ever hesitate to let us know how we can better serve you. See you in thirty.

EDITOR BIOS

GREG OFF

Finally slowing down from the marathon telephone sessions, (and a little strategy guide work) Greg is now looking forward to reaching the end of his prime. When he arrives, he hopes it won't be time to start the next issue. Greg is all about luvin' but is looking a little yellow around the edges, like an old book.

CURRENTLY PLAYING: Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, Road Rash Jailbreak, NBA 2K and Vigilante 8: 2nd Off

DAVE WINDING

When he has had a few moments, he has been checking out NBA 2K, Toy Commander and Slave Zero on the Dreamcast and Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine on PC. He has been looking forward to the Thanksgiving holiday, where he has planned to spend it playing OK 64 and beating CTR.

CURRENTLY PLAYING: Tomb Raider 4, CTR, NBA 2K, Slave Zero, Indy and the Infernal Machine, and more!

MARK ANDROVICH

chose Mountain Dew in a blind taste test that also included Storm, Surge, and Prestone. During recent strategy guide writing sessions, he single-handedly increased sales of all caffeine-laced products by 50%. He was last seen wandering around his neighborhood at 2 a.m. muttering "I can't stop moving my legs!"

CURRENTLY PLAYING: Currently NOT playing: Dino Crisis, Crash Team Racing, Resident Evil 3: Nemesis and TR4.

ADAM PAVLACKA

Adam has led a rather bland life this past month. More or less he's just been working like mad. No matter, the end of the year will be here soon enough and then he can party like a wild man. Until then, though, baker's man Greg will keep the reins tight and the work a-coming. God bless everyone!

CURRENTLY PLAYING: MTV Sports: Snowboarding, GTA2, Toy Story 2, Wipeout 3, Starcraft.

ERIC WINDING

Eric recently fell out of his tree-house and landed on his head. Fortunately, the concrete suffered only minor damage. As a result, Joe SPorts has discovered a new world of games like Spyro 2 and Toy Story 2. Perhaps if Eric gets pushed (uh, falls) out again, he'll start playing RPG's!

CURRENTLY PLAYING: Spyro 2, Toy Story 2, NBA Live 2K, GT2, Driver

DILLION MERZ

This month found Dillion handing off web site duties so that he could pursue his mission of trying to dissect every X-File episode. There is something out there, whether or not it is the truth, he will find out. Last we heard he was off hoarding flashlights, batteries, and government papers for his Y2K fallout shelter.

CURRENTLY PLAYING: TM4, Galerians, Tony Hawk.

ALEX ANDREWS

Wheeeew, what a month for poor Alex. Last reports saw him in Dubai participating in some bizarre camel ritual. After returning to the Office, he found a little time to start shopping. As soon as he finished that, he said something about Mayan lizard rituals and New Years Eve. It's really starting to get weird.

CURRENTLY PLAYING: Tomorrow Never Dies, Crash Team Racing, Lego Racers.

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SNOWBOARDING ETIQUETTE

with Steve

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YOUR GUESTS SHOULD STAY IN COMFORT. NO MORE THAN 8 TO A ROOM.

Many experts say that ten or twelve guests in a room is completely acceptable, but in my experience, a good host will cap it at eight. Your guests' needs should always be top of mind. Offer up a thigh for a pillow, or if you have a toothbrush, share it.

DON'T LITTER THE MOUNTAIN WITH UNNECESSARY TISSUES.

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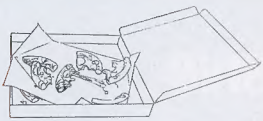

Another great energy source is the #1 snowboarding game, Cool Boarders 4. Make your soul patch tingle with new tweaked out grabs and tricks like method-melons and hand plants. 16 pros including Jim Rippey, Shaun White and J.P. Walker tear it up on 30 new courses riddled with short cuts, kickers and rail slides. One to four riders can choose from 34 boards by 9 top companies, or customize their own. Please friend, have a lovely shred.

As you jump through a boxcar, don't stare at the hobos. They're people too.

When crossing a road, share a good moon with a family. Preferably one in a mini-van.

In the heat of competition, show no etiquette. Losers never get the honeys.

www.989studios.com

EXPLORE THE FREAK WITHIN

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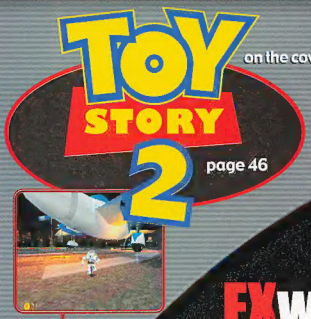

on the cover
page 46

EXmail

This is the really neat section of the magazine where we print mail and email that we get from readers and make fun of them. If you would like fun made of you, send some mail.

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EXnews

More, more, more, more PS2 info!! All that, plus a new Strider bound for PSX. Austin Powers bound for PSX. EA hoards the James Bond license. All that, plus more, more, more PS2 info! Yay.

12

EXware

We've got a new ditty for EXware. It goes like this... EXware is a ruckin', la, la, la. Don't come a-knockin', on our door la, la, la. Less-in you got some hardware, uh-baby! la, la. Shake your tail feather and-ah bounce your jiggly bits, mama, la, la, la. Yeah!

20

EXecute

If you were ever interested in finding out about the codes for PlayStation, you should check out our code section, right here. People write us to say "make a bigger code section", but we won't! Two pages is plenty of codes for a month. Wah, wah, wah.

24

EXtreme

If this section were a dog, you'd want to rub it's head. That's how it is. We've just finished up five years worth of magazines and we're going to cover Toy Story 2 to celebrate, plus give out some awards and quiz your brain. Yowzahs.

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EXclusive

Now that we've got all that fourth-quarter game craziness out of our systems, it's time to relax and only show two or three EXclusive things in an issue. Check out the new Road Rash and the new Ace Combat. They's plenty good.

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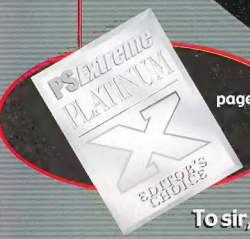
EXcerpt

When it comes to talkin' to folks, we do it up right. Turn to these pages and you'll see us talkin' to some folks 'bout Medal of Honor and stuff and stuff.

EXpecting

We take on all comers with aplomb and style again this month with a fabulous preview section of the stars. We don't hurt for good previews and it shows.



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To sir, with love.

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Find out what all the buzz is about.

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EXit

When the issue ends and you're feeling blue, turn to this page and you'll get a little dose of the good humor or controversy, courtesy of our publisher, Dave.

EXcavate

If there's one thing in life that's good, it's lists. When you think of lists, think of us and our fancy EXcavate section and think a good thought about it and send us some fresh cold cuts, please.

SPorts

Once we got a letter from a dude who said he'd rather pick a chigger out of his scalp than read another magazine's sports section. That's a compliment we'll always remember, especially when we're creating future sports sections. It could actually inspire new innovations in sports coverage.

EXrated

Gosh. There's so much to say about the review section it's hard to decide what bits to stick in this little box, because there's not really enough room to say all the things that need saying, if you catch our drift. Check out an upcoming issue for a full rundown.

There once was a jet from Nantucket...

page 40

SuperCross Circuit™

BURY THE

That's

Top Riders Including...

① Albertyn	⑭ Lamson
② Button	⑮ LaRocco
③ Dowd	⑯ Lusk
④ Emig	⑰ Lytle
⑤ Ferry	⑱ Pichon
⑥ Henry	⑲ Tortelli
⑦ Huffman	⑳ Ward
⑧ Hughes	㉑ Windham
⑨ Johnson	

Supercross/Motocross Tracks

① Glen Helen Raceway	⑫ Qualcomm
② Spring Creek Motocross Park	⑬ Bank One Ballpark
③ Washougal Motocross Park	⑭ Sam Boyd Stadium
④ Unadilla Valley	⑮ Metrodome
⑤ Budds Creek Motocross Park	⑯ Astrodome
⑥ Kenworthys Motocross Park	⑰ Atlanta, Georgia
⑦ Highpoint Raceway	⑱ Pontiac Silverdome
⑧ Southwick	⑲ Raymond James Stadium
⑨ Hanglewn Raceway	⑳ Red Bud Track N Trail
⑩ Steel City Raceway	㉑ Anaheim, California
⑪ Broome Tioga Sports Center	

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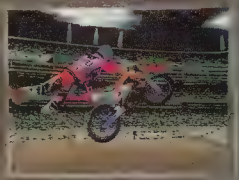
COMPETITION.

what the dirt's for.



989 SPORTS

Hot Topic: Are Video games Educational?

Recently, a group of pediatricians recommended that no child under the age of 2 be allowed to watch television programs of any kind. In addition, this group advocated severe restrictions on television viewing for older children and suggested that physicians start taking a "viewing history" of young patients to determine how many hours of television they have been exposed to. This group was concerned with decreased attention spans and the inability to concentrate, as well as increasing levels of obesity in children. So how does this relate to videogames? Since videogames are played on a television set, this group (and many others) lumped them together with television programming. Unfortunately, they are comparing apples and oranges.

I won't defend television, but videogames are far less passive. With videogames, kids learn cause and effect-what they do with their fingers on the controller has an effect on what they see on the screen. They learn logical thinking and puzzle solving. My 3 year-old knows that if he wants to go through a certain door he must first obtain the key that matches. He has memorized patterns of enemies, he knows what a tachometer is for, and he can recognize words such as "pause," "start," "exit," and "save" and knows what they mean. He copies the dancers' moves in Bust A Groove and tells me which button to press when he sees it flash on the screen in PaRappa. He is also learning spatial relationships trying to rotate the pieces in Tetris.

Now, I am not suggesting that we should all raise our children on videogames as a substitute for normal schooling or other educational activities. Neither am I recommending that we leave our 3 year-olds in front of a N64 or PlayStation all day. Like most everything else fun in life, videogames should be enjoyed in moderation. Parents should decide how long to allow their kids to play games and what games are appropriate for their age level. As my son knows, he cannot play a "T for Teenager" or "M for Mature" game until he is older.

My point is that videogames are not automatically inappropriate forms of entertainment and learning for children. I think they get a bad rap by being lumped together with mindless television programming. There really is a difference between the two.

~Mark Androvich

Dear PSExtreme,

I just received my December issue of your magazine, which rocks by the way, and immediately turned to the review for Knockout Kings 2000. You see, I purchased it a couple of days ago and, since I've always valued your opinion on games, I wanted to read what you guys thought of the game. I began reading the review by Eric Winding and, instead of an informative and enlightening review, I got almost three quarters of a page of pissin' and moanin' about, of all things, MUSIC!?! He is entitled to his opinion, I personally like hip-hop, along with Zeppelin, Chili Peppers and various other styles of music, but he wasted valuable review space to cry about his dislike for rap. Rock music has been in everything from games to advertising, you name it. Hip-hop is here to stay, grab a hanky and deal with it buddy.

Lost in his whining was an insightful review of game depth and other subjects. He said the create-a-player mode was deeper. I wanted to know his thoughts on that considering the weight and height choices at least in the heavyweight class was rather limited to me. I could create fat guys last year, this year I can't. And every fighter I fight has a longer reach than me. I guess those type of things weren't as important as screaming about music.

So, I flip to the NBA Live 2000 review because I'm thinking of buying a b-ball game. A first in three years. Eric again is the reviewer and states his space is limited so he wants to, " Get right to it."

After a brief overview of the options, which he suggests I can skip, he "gets right to" another three quarters of "limited" space to, you guessed it, more pissin' and moanin'! He assumes we all know the details of Live 99, so he sacrifices the rest of the review to complain about missing players. He made a good point, but I still know nothing about the game. How are the graphics? How's the control? How's the depth of features and game play? Oh yeah, I need to check Live 99 for all that. Silly me.

Thanks a lot Mr. Winding. Your opinions are important but, when they over shadow real game information, it's excessive. You sacrificed gamers for your own personal issues. Shame on you. I'm surprised the editor let your gripe sessions make it to press. Next time, please provide the information I value your magazine so highly for and keep the social commentary to a minimum.

An information starved gamer,
William White

Eric replies: First of all, dear William, if you played more games, perhaps you wouldn't be a "starved gamer", and you would be more up-to-speed with the info. Knockout Kings: thanks for the paragraph on YOUR musical tastes & opinions. Now, why bag on me for expressing my musical preferences? But, more to the point, the majority of my paragraph dealt with the concerns I have over the software publisher using game & editorial (back of manual) space to advertise the recording artist. Now, I'm not naive enough to think that this type of "music for notoriety" trade-off hasn't existed for some time but, in the case of KK2K, it just seems extreme. As for Live 2K, c'mon, dude, where you been? It's basically been the same game for FOUR years. The graphics look just like every other hoops game, and EA has always had more stats and game play options than anyone, so why would this year be any different? You're right on one account, though, and that is that I assume the majority of you reading PSExtreme have been playing PlayStation games for more than a year, and thus, are aware that most sports sequels simply add a few NEW features and keep the rest of the game intact. Let me know what you think of my reviews in this issue!

Dear PSExtreme,

I have been a faithful reader of your magazine for some time now. But, until today, I have never had reason to dislike anything about it. I just read the interview on Knockout Kings 2000, and I am highly offended by the content of the review. SO WHAT if they used hip-hop music for the game! Of all the million and one games that are filled with that techno, or hard core rock, hip-hop can't get a few games here and there? I don't know if you've been in front of your video game monitor recently (20 years or so), but some people just happen to like it. As a hip-hop enthusiast/video game lover, I'm highly offended. As a game review person, or whatever you call yourself, you should be more concerned about letting us know whether or not the game is worth the price of purchase, and not use this as a platform for your trivial biased opinions. Keep them to your own closed/feeble minded self. I know it won't hurt your sales, but you lost a faithful subscriber! Where's Al Sharpton when you need him?...

Ryv Dawg

Eric replies: A) Why be so "offended"? It's just my musical opinion that I'm expressing, much like you so eloquently stated your personal tastes in your email. Life's too short to get all excited about what this person or that person thinks — as long as you're happy with your decisions, then that's all that matters, right? Or, are you really so insecure in your beliefs that you would be upset with anyone that didn't feel the same way? If that's the case, then perhaps you don't feel as strongly about the subject as you think you do, because, if you're a true believer, you know that IT DOESN'T MATTER what other people think. Be your own man. Drink Sprite.
B) the word is "review", not "interview"
C) the word is "editor", not "game review person"!
D) personal opinions are rarely "trivial"
E) we checked - we have no subscriber (and never have) named "Ryv Dawg" — thanks for reading PSExtreme — home of the hip-hop gamer.

Dear PSExtreme,

Hi I was wondering if you guys have ever rated a game a perfect 100%? If you have, which one(s)?
And I was also wondering if Sunsoft has anything to do with Squaresoft? Because Sunsoft made a Final Fantasy Legend for Gameboy... thanks...great mags.

wursix

We have never rated a game a perfect 100%. There have been several (Tony Hawk) that we were tempted to give

NCAA® Final Four® 2000 has more than 300 Division I teams from 31 conferences. It's got 100 new animations including 15 new high flying dunks with graphics twice as detailed and smooth as last year. Team-specific playbooks, crowd chants and fight songs create an intense college setting for every game. It's the complete college experience, minus the midterms and missed classes.

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the perfect score to, but we have all discussed it and decided that there's always something wrong, no matter what. Humans are not perfect and therefore cannot make a perfect game. Tony Hawk takes too long to load. There's the 1 point. Hehe. Sunsoft and Squaresoft are completely different companies. Sunsoft simply acquired the rights to that one.

Dear PSExtreme,

Well, first of all, I think that your magazine is great and I always get them from EBworld. Anyway, I was wondering... When Resident Evil 3 comes out, will it cost, like, $40-50? Also, how much will PlayStation 2 cost? I heard that it was going to cost, like, $500! Is that true? I can't get that kinda dough.
What would you do if you found out that a person you met stole Silent Hill from you? I was going to beat him like one of those nurses, but then I would be in trouble. Well that's about it, but I will write back sometime in the future.

Corey York

Thanks for the kind words. RE3 came out in the time it took to get your letter printed. It's $44.95. PS2 will be around $400 when it first comes out in Japan. By the time it comes out in the U.S., it should be a bit cheaper. After the initial release. competition should drive the price down even further around the holidays.
If someone stole Silent Hill from us, we would sick the attack chickens on them to retrieve it. Definitely don't beat on anyone unless they beat on you first, and then you must not wait, you must return the beats immediately only with the intention of keeping them from beating you any further. If you were to go beat them because they stole something or even because they beat you earlier, that's illegal. You can only beat them in order to defend yourself. If you know the person that stole something and you feel you won't get beat, tell them you know they stole it and offer them a chance to return it with no strings attached, but if they don't return it, you will take appropriate action. Don't tell them what the action would be. Leave that to their imagination. It would be good to have a large friend with tattoos standing next to you when you make this suggestion. Remember, we are not your attorney, nor are we lawyers, so don't take our word as law. Don't try to use this mail section in court if you get arrested, ok? Don't get beat on our account, either, 'cause that would suck. In fact, to protect our selves, we must decline to give any advice at all. Okay? Thank you, goodbye.

Dear PSExtreme,

I'm writing in regards to the review of Tony Hawk in your PSExtreme (vol. 4, issue 12, Nov 99'). I'm a little disturbed over here because I generally like to use magazine reviews as a basis for my game buying decisions. I was reading the review by Chris Kramer and noticed a particular line that grabbed my attention. It was a valid complaint about the Playstation control pad being harsh on one's thumbs, except that at no point in Tony Hawk do you ever need to mash the controller. I realize that there are some "people" out there who have to mash their thumbs into every controller for every game, but Chris said it was because of the game. Here's a direct quote: "Since the secret to Pro Skater is to grab big air and then begin rotating the d-pad like a nut, you're constantly mashing your thumb across the d-pad."...Huh? What version of Pro Skater are YOU talking about? My copy doesn't require you to rotate the d-pad in any way what-so-ever. So what's really going on? Chris also said that he played the game for three days straight at eight hours per day. So how can he have played for that long and still think that you need to rotate the d-pad like a mental patient? This only leads me to believe that you people don't even play the games that you review. If this were any other game, I would have never considered buying it knowing that I just read a bunch of propaganda from some company's sell sheet. I expect when I read a review that I'm reading the actual unbiased opinion of some average joe like me, not regurgitated selling points. It's a good thing that Tony Hawk is the best game in the world, or you could have lost Activision and Neversoft one very satisfied customer. Next time, try asking your eight year old brother to read your review and to point out all the false information.
Anyway, enough complaints. What are the most points you can score in that game from one trick combo? The best I ever did was 150,000 and that wasn't even pulling off the optimal tricks. Don't you think that it would have been good for them to include "manual tricks" in the game. It would be so fresh to bust a crazy gap and land on your back wheels and hold it until your next hit. I can only wait for part two, three, four and five. They need to make a Dreamcast or PC version too, so the polys don't flicker.

Anyway, gotta go.
Bye bye butterflies.
J

We would normally turn the keyboard over to Chris Kramer to reply but Chris is no longer with the company. However, we can guarantee you that Chris did not re-hash press releases to review Tony Hawk. He spent a great deal of time playing the game and telling us how wonderful it was. He loved it so much, in fact, he wanted to give it a perfect 100%, but we would not let him. As for the d-pad gyrations, well... Kramer will be the first to tell you that he's no master gamer... if he thought jamming the d-pad was increasing his score, why tell him otherwise? Let the man have his fun.

Dear PSExtreme,

First in the simplest term your magazine is THE BEST!!! Enough of that kissy kissy soft mushy stuff!!
On to business, I've been reading PSExtreme, getting info from the Internet all about Gran Turismo 2 and the verdict points to the best racing game of the millennium. (Yea baby). So the day the demos for (what else) PlayStation including GT2 came out I brought it, and played GT2 demo and sad to say I was not impressed at all. :-(What I experienced was poor handling and the graphics weren't as clean as GT. If the game wasn't ready for a demo why would SCEA release a demo for it?!? (What kind of sickness is that?)
Please tell me the demo was a mistake, please tell me that the graphics were a fluke, and please tell me that the demo was premature and not ready for the public! Tell me, tell me!

Eternally yours,
Evolver

The demo you played was extremely early. It's our guess that Sony wanted to give fans and gamers something to play before the holidays and the release of the game. These demos are put together literally months before they fall into your greedy hands and the content is bound to change before the final release. You can rest assured, the final product will be a much more polished effort. We have played the latest betas (we're doing the official strategy guide) and GT2 is shaping up quite nicely. You can expect the full review next month, as the game is still scheduled for a December 7th release.

Dear PSExtreme,

Hello, my name is Aaron and I know my dream job. I am currently a freshman enrolled in a high honors program called International Baccalaureate, and I probably could be a biologist or an astrophysicist when I grow up, but that is not what I want. What I really enjoy is writing about and playing PlayStation. While everyone else plays sports, I play video games. I want to know... what chance do I have of working for/with you guys at PSExtreme when I graduate?

Thanks,
Aaron
True gamer for life!

Your chances of working for/with us are, ohhhh, about 1 in 100,000. There's probably at least that many other kids out there who would love to work for us. That's a very conservative number, too, considering how many readers we have. Honestly, speaking as people who already write about and play video games for a living, don't do it. There are two main reasons against making writing about video games your career. Firstly, the pay isn't that great and the deadlines are hideous. You won't be able to afford much in life. Nextly, you'll eventually burn out on writing about games and you'll have no other skills that are in demand. Video game writers are in very, very low demand. When have you ever, EVER, seen an ad looking for someone to write about games? That's right, you haven't ever. Definitely go for the biologist or astrophysicist position. Then, you'll have enough money that you can buy and play as many games as you like. You can spend your spare time playing them and writing about them on the internet, and you won't get burned out on it because it won't be what you do every waking moment. If you are truly a video game fanatic, and you've known all of your life that it's what you want to do for a living, and it's all you think about, even above girls, then maybe, MAYBE, you've got a chance. However, you shouldn't aspire to work for us or anyone else. You should work for yourself, because the only way to make enough money, is if you're the boss. Start a web site now, while you're still living with mom and pop and don't need money, and get other kids (there's plenty) to write for your site for free. Make it the best video game web site on the planet. Then, when you're a video game web site deity and get zillions of hits per day, you'll have the name and reputation to get backing for your own real business. Then, when/if you get burned out on games, you can just hire someone to run the place or sell it, and go off to chase those women you never noticed before.

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from around the globe

STRIDER 2 PLAYSTATION-BOUND

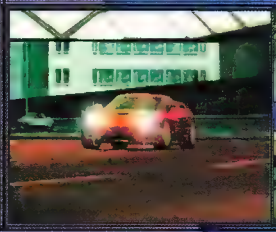
Capcom's upcoming sequel to the '80's arcade and Genesis hit will be coming to the PlayStation next year. We had a chance to play the new arcade game at E3 and, while it certainly doesn't represent state-of-the-art technology, it looks to be consistent with the Strider world that 30-something's remember.

SCEA PREDICTS BIG NUMBERS AT THE PLAYSTATION BOX OFFICE

Sony Computer Entertainment America expects that holiday 1999 sales generated by PlayStation and its software and peripherals will top the $1 billion mark. Let's see, that's 10 million PlayStations sold, or 50 million Greatest Hits games, or 1 billion copies of Tomorrow Never Dies (if you wait two weeks until the price drop to $0.99).

OH, NO... EA GETS RIGHTS TO BOND... JAMES BOND

Speaking of Tomorrow Never Dies, Electronic Arts recently announced that they have obtained a multi-year license to produce games based on and around everybody's favorite super-spy, James Bond. This is really, really bad news if you are a Bond fan. Unless, of course, there is some way that EA can do a deal with Rare (Goldeneye on N64), Eidetic (Syphon Filter) or Konami (Metal Gear Solid) to do the games. Obviously, Black Ops didn't cut the mustard on TND, but they can't be blamed for banging the game to market. EA has shown a complete inability to discern quality software from junk... and they probably don't care one way or the other. The moment that Xerox was a steaming pile and dumped it on the guy who was there to get it in their grocery cart? That's how Xerox got on. EA. It's not that they don't produce some good games (Need for Speed, Medal of Honor), it's just that they don't seem to know the difference. In any event, they are not the people that you want to entrust the Bond license to. Of course, we could have made a mistake, maybe they were talking about "James Pond"... a license that the folks at EA are a little more familiar with.



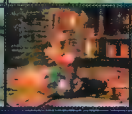
IN THE '90'S, WE HAD THIS THING WE LIKED TO CALL A "PLAYSTATION"

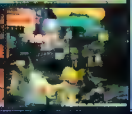
Take-Two Interactive has announced that they have entered a four year licensing agreement with New Line Cinema to produce games based on the Austin Powers license. It is the company's plan to, among other things, develop games for current platforms for the year 2000, games for PlayStation2 in 2001 and beyond, and to make more than "one million dollars" doing it. We know the perfect first game, "Mini-Me Midget Wrestling." Even better, have them race Nascar vehicles to the event location, and have them stop to fish and shoot deer along the way... that would be sweeet!

A FEW, NEW NAMCO PS2 SCREENS TO WOW YOU

No real news to report on for Namco's first PS2 offerings (Tekken Tag Tournament and The Next Ridge Racer), but we do have a sampling of new screen shots to show off. Go on and soak them up.

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT





from around the globe

ABE'S EXODUS FROM PLAYSTATION TO PS2

Check out these shots. We were recently given a videotape by the good folks at Oddworld Inhabitants, depicting action from their first PS2 game, "Munch's Oddyssey". It blew us away. The graphics and camera movement are so far beyond anything you've seen to this point in time that comparisons are pointless. We will be following the development of this title very closely. While there is no word on whether or not Munch is going to be an American launch title, the work that we have seen is as far along as anything coming from Japan. We'll keep you posted.

DUKE IS GONNA NUKE 'EM ON PS2

Take 2 Interactive announced that they have entered a one title agreement with 3D Realms to produce a PlayStation2 exclusive version of the popular Duke Nukem series. The as of yet untitled game will expand upon the franchise to produce the biggest Duke adventure yet. n-Space, the developer of Duke Nukem Time to Kill is slated as the developer of record on the product. Both Time to Kill and their recent Duke effort on the N64 are quality work, so you can expect to see big things from these guys on PS2.

top Selling titles

TRST

November, 1999

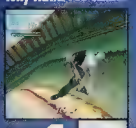
Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Tracking Service
900 West Shore Road, Port Washington, NY 11050
(516) 625-2294

1 — Capcom's **Resident Evil 3** — last month: 1 — average retail price: $50

2 — EA's **Knockout Kings 2000** — last month: 2 — average retail price: $41

3 — Sony's **Crash Team Racing** — last month: 4 — average retail price: $40

4 — Activision's **Tony Hawk Pro Skater** — last month: 5 — average retail price: $42



5 — Sony's **Spyro the Dragon** — last month: 6 — average retail price: $20

6 — GT Interactive **Driver** — last month: 4 — average retail price: $40

7 — Sony's **Spyro: Ripto's Rage** — last month: 10 — average retail price: $40

8 — EA's **Madden 2000** — last month: 2 — average retail price: $40

9 — Sony's **Gran Turismo** — last month: 3 — average retail price: $20

10 — Namco **Pac-Man World** — last month: ** — average retail price: $40

** Not in Top 10 last Month. The ratings reflected above are those of Dimension Publishing and do not represent the opinions of [illegible]

"...easily the most realistic and challenging skater yet"
Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine *-August 1999*

Over 100 tricks to pull.

Legendary skate spots including China Banks, the Venice Beach Pavilion, Brooklyn Banks and more.

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The best video game soundtrack ever compiled featuring.....

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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EXware

[illegible] the new GameShark hasn't made an appearance in the offices (Interact keeps saying "it'll be out next month"), but as soon as one shows up EXware will have a complete review. Although nothing is confirmed as one of the rumored reasons for the delay is that the new GameShark will be a 6th version of a hardware device. This could be interesting if the rumor bears out.

In other news, Interact's new racing wheel is also back. It is so cool in fact we decided to run another contest. If you'd like to win a shiny new wheel to use with the likes of Gran Turismo 2 and Wipeout 3, listen up. Dig out your old copy of Gran Turismo and race the Clubman Stage Route 5. You can race with any car on any difficulty, but in order to win you have to have the fastest total track time (lap time doesn't count). Once you've set the record, take a picture and send it in. The winner keeps the Concept 4 wheel.

[illegible] Controller and Memory Card

[illegible]

MSRP: $9.95 (each)

Although the quality of Barbie as a female role-model leaves much up to debate, the fact remains that young girls across the country look to Barbie as the "ideal" female (and guys across the country can only pray that Barbie is the ideal female figure). In an attempt to capture the Barbie loving market, Interact has created both the Barbie controller and the Barbie memory card.

The controller comes with a mini-game system for your Barbie doll to play with. The full size controller is molded in Barbie colors and is well constructed. The eight-way d-pad is much more comfortable than the standard PlayStation d-pad.

The only problem with the controller is that it is not Dual Shock compatible. Why even bother making a controller without analog sticks or vibration support? We know Interact can do it, they have some good Dual Shock controllers out there. Do the marketing guys really think that girls won't buy a Dual Shock controller? Sure it may have cost five dollars more, but it would have been worth it. Had this been a Dual Shock, it would have been a recommended purchase for any younger sisters out there.

Sold separately from the controller, the memory card is a standard 15-block memory card. Nothing special here except for the coloring. Like the controller, the card is done up in Barbie glory. Strangely, the memory card doesn't come with any labeling stickers. Not that it is a big worry. The bright colors easily identify this one.

Concept 4

[illegible]

MSRP: $29.99

Design is the Concept 4's best feature, with all of the necessary options close at hand. The Concept 4 has four action buttons located on the edge of the wheel itself at the 10 o'clock and the 2 o'clock positions. The other actions buttons are located on the face of the steering column. These edge buttons are perfectly placed for use while racing. No longer do you have to worry about looking for a button on the controller, because the buttons you need are right under your thumbs. These buttons are a godsend if you are a Wipeout fan.

The steering column adjusts for different drivers. It supports digital, neGcon and Dual Shock modes. External pedals are included, as are two pedal levers on the wheel itself. The buttons on the wheel can be remapped if you choose.

Unfortunately, the wheel isn't perfect. A few niggling details keep this one from a Platinum. The external pedals don't anchor completely, which means they have a slight tendency to move around. The resting position of the pedals is also a tad uncomfortable. The metal pedal levers on the wheel have a solid edge, which will dig into your hands after an extended playing period. This can get annoying. Also, the vibration motor in the wheel draws a lot of power so you cannot use other vibration controllers with the PlayStation unless you plug the wheel itself into a power outlet (power adapter is included with the wheel).

Despite its problems, the Concept 4 is still the best PlayStation wheel out there. If you're in the market for a steering controller, pass on the rest and go for this one. You won't be disappointed.

GT2 [illegible]

[illegible]

MSRP: $34.95

It may have the abbreviation GT2 in the name, but this wheel has nothing to do with Gran Turismo 2. It is simply a bit of marketing.

When you are in the heat of a driving game, smacking buttons on the face of a wheel is not the most likely prospect in the world. The best place for action buttons is on the rim of the wheel itself – either on the front under the thumbs or on the backside under the index and middle fingers. It amazes me how few wheel manufacturers have figured this out.

Handling with the controller was a bit touchy in either analog mode. It was almost impossible to steer a car in a straight line with this wheel. No matter which game was used, this wheel forced the vehicle into a series of s-turns every time.

Another issue with the wheel is the lack of a clamp mechanism. It does have suction cups, but they disengage a tad too easily. While the small size of this wheel may be appealing, poor button layout and very touchy steering make this one to consider only as a last resort.

Virtual Light Gun

[illegible]

MSRP: $29.99

Pelican's latest light gun combines the features – auto reload, auto fire, recoil, reload button and gunCon compatibility – with an extremely comfortable body. Physically, the Virtual Light Gun is one of the nicest feeling guns out there. It is lightweight and features a rubberized grip.

The light gun's recoil feature is powered by the PlayStation (no batteries required) and it is a gentle kickback instead of the loud knocking found on other guns. It is a completely optional feature (no games require it) but it is fun to play with.

The only real problem with the gun is the main trigger. The trigger needs to move out nearly all the way before you can depress it a second time to fire off another shot. While this may be realistic from a gun perspective, it is terrible from a game perspective. Game players typically play shooting games like action movies – twitch the trigger as fast as you can. It is impossible to twitch fire here. A major disappointment.

If you're playing with the turbo fire set, or if you are a more methodical shooter, the Virtual Light Gun is something to check out. If you're like me though, and like to twitch that trigger as fast as possible, you'll be better off with another gun.

X-Drive

[illegible]

MSRP: $29.99

Another Dex Drive clone, the X-Drive isn't much to look at initially. It has the same basic feature set and it is compatible with the Dex Drive saves. The box is a basic gray and the software is less than pretty. That being said, the X-Drive really is function over form. It may not look it, but there are some useful features hidden in there.

The X-Drive can run off of four AAA batteries or an AC adapter. Unfortunately, the power adapter isn't included which means you have to use batteries. On the upside, the batteries last a long time and make the unit extremely portable. By itself, the X-Drive acts as a standalone card copier. No editing can be done without a PC, but you can duplicate cards.

Connection to a PC is via the included parallel cable. The software which drives the unit is a single DOS executable file. All commands must be entered via the keyboard (there is no mouse support), but a simple menu system ensures that the program is easy to use. File transfers are done quickly, with entire cards copying in less than half a minute.

Had the X-Drive been supplied with a power adapter and a "prettier" program, it would have likely rated higher. As it is, the unit is a solid performer, even if it is a "no frills" device. If you are familiar with PCs, and don't mind using DOS, then this is a viable alternative to the Dex Drive.

Meet the New Cast of Characters

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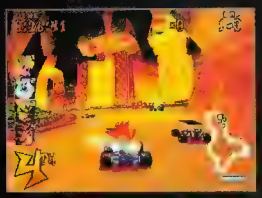
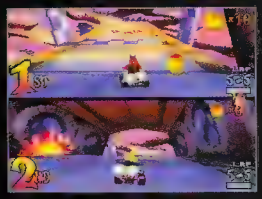
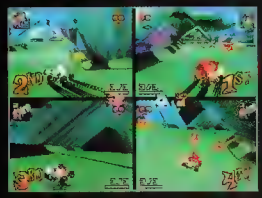






It's not driving. It's a motorized beat-down. Leave skid marks on 25 different tracks. Reduce your fellow drivers to roadkill. And if you're man enough to survive the hairpin turns, you'll score a TURBO boost. Unless, of course, you get 86'ed by a TNT crate. Plug in the Multi Tap adaptor and up to four players can race to the ugly finish. With over 12 playable characters in all. Basically, it's a full-blown war on wheels.

www.playstation.com

Once he gets behind the wheel, things get ugly.

SEND US YOUR CODES AND WIN BIG PRIZES!

Each month we'll pick the best code sent in by our loyal and intelligent readers and send that person a brand spankin' new copy of AGETEC's hot destruction game for the PlayStation, Armored Core: Project Phantasma or, if you're funky-funky, fresh, AGETEC's ASCII Sphere 360 (you decide). But wait! That's not all: if you act now, we'll also include AGETEC's super stylish ASCII Grip one-handed controller for the PlayStation, for your controlling pleasure, PLUS twelve (12) free issues of the best, the first, monthly dedicated PlayStation magazine, PSExtreme, of course! Whoa! That's a lot of cool stuff for just a code; what are you waiting for?

WE HAVE A WINNER!

Radical, ninja master, blackbelt, hightop, rockin' thanks go out this month to our good friend, Alex Wundlazun from Rocklin, TN. Alex supplied us with these neat codes 2 Rumble with. Thanks Alex.

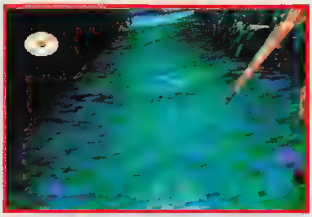
Ready 2 Rumble

UNLOCK BOXERS
At the Main Menu, select "Championship Mode", then "New Game" and enter the following gym names:
BRONZE: Bronze Class Boxers
SILVER: Silver Class Boxers
GOLD: Gold Class Boxers
CHAMP: Champ Class Boxers
In addition to unlocking the boxers in Championship Mode, each code will also unlock one character in Arcade Mode.

CONTEST RULES: Anyone of any age can enter. The only people not eligible to win are employees of Dimension Publishing or AGETEC, their friends, family, pets and anyone they talk to or know of. Dimension Publishing reserves the right to make any and all decisions regarding the contest. One winner per month will be chosen, at Dimension Publishing's discretion, based on the code or trick supplied by the entrant. If you win but do not specify, in your code submission, which prize you want to receive, then we will choose for you.

ATTENTION CHEATERS
It has come to our attention that some of the codes submitted by our readers were out-and-out stolen directly from www.cheatcc.com and other web sites. This is not cool. If you're going to submit a code, you have to explain how to do the code in your own words. You cannot just copy/paste the text from someone's web site and claim it as your own. This is plagiarism. Get with it, peeps. Don't make yourself look silly in print

Medal of Honor



Kill Yourself
Press R1, R2, L2, R1, R1, R1, R2, L2, L1, L1 then press ● quickly. If entered correctly your player will blow up and say, "What did you do that for?"

Mission Impossible

Passwords
Select the "LOAD GAME" option and enter a code below as a password. If you get an error message, just ignore it.
Turbo On:
GOOUTTAMYWAY
Slo-Motion:
IMTIREDTODAY
Big Jumps:
BIONICJUMPER
AI Off:
SCAREDSTIFFF
Hidden Message:
TTOPFSECRETT
FMV Sequences:
SEECOOLMOVIE

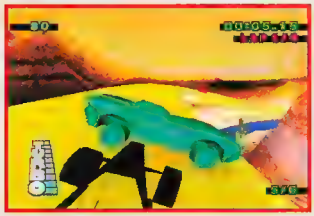
Twisted Metal 4

Special Moves
You can pull off these special moves during gameplay.
Freeze: ←, →, ↑, ↑
Rear freeze: ←, →, ↓, ↓
Massive attack: ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑
Rear massive attack: ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↓
Rear attack: →, ←, ↓, ↓
Jump: ↑, ↑, ←
Shield: ↑, ↑, →
Invisibility: ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑
Hyperspace: ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓

Army Men: Air Attack

Password
To get all CO-Pilots enter ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓ as a Password.
Level Passwords
Level 4: ↓, ↓, ●, ●, ←, →, ○, ✕
Level 6: ●, ○, ✕, ●, △, ←, ↑, →
Level 7: →, ↓, ←, ↑, △, ↓, ↑, ↓
Level 8: ○, ○, →, ↑, →, ↑, ✕, ✕
Level 9: ✕, ↓, ↓, ↓, ↓, ✕, ←, →
Level 10: △, ↑, ○, ↓, ●, ←, ✕, →
Level 16: ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, △, ○, △, ○

Hot Wheels



Infinite turbo
Go to the main menu, then press R2, L1, ●, △, R1, L2, L1, R2. You should hear a sound if entered correctly.
TowJam car
Go to the main menu, then press ●, △, L1, R1, L2, R2, ●, △. You should hear a sound if entered correctly.
Little cars
Go to the main menu, then press ●, R2, L2, △, △, L2, R2, ●. You should hear a sound if entered correctly.
Large tires
Go to the main menu, then press ●, △, ●, △, R1, R1, L2, L2 You should hear a sound if entered correctly.
Flat shaded graphics
Go to the main menu, then press L1, R1, L2, R2, L1, R1, L2, R2. You should hear a sound if entered correctly.
Dude sounds
Go to the main menu, press R2, R1, L2, R2, ●, △, L1, R1. You should hear a sound if entered correctly.

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"The mother of all urban turf wars"

[illegible] Magazine

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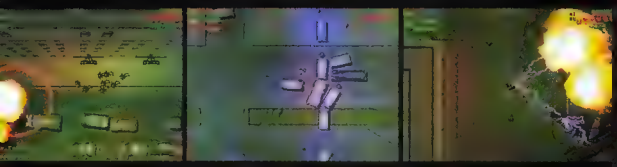

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Rockstar Motorola Pager with a purchase of GTA2.

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PlayStation

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD ROM

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GAME SHARK Codez

Welcome to the Game Shark section. Each month we'll list the newest and coolest codez right here for your cheat'n pleasure. Warning: These codes won't work without a Game Shark. For the latest codez and info, get on the Internet and check www.gameshark.com, www.cmgscc.com or www.datel.co.uk. If you find a code doesn't work, you may need to upgrade your Game Shark. Check your instruction manual for details.
(Most of these codes are "unofficial" and may or may not work correctly at all. Use at your own risk.)

```
COOL BOARDERS 4 (GameShark v3.2)
Perfect Time ..... 8004D32A 240Q
Unlock All Mountains ..... 3006757C 00FF
Unlock Eddie ..... 3006757E 0001
Unlock Mars ..... 3006757F 0001
Unlock Irving ..... 30067580 0001
Unlock Honey Brown ..... 30067582 0001
Unlock Crusty ..... 30067583 0001
Max Score ..... 800A1FC8 FFFF
..... 800A1FCA 000E
Unlock Cool ..... 30067581 0001
All Difficulties Completed
Under Trick Master ..... 3006757D 00FF
..... 8006757E FFFF
Unlock All Events - Vermont..30067580 00FF
..... 30067587 00FF
Unlock All Events - Colorado30067581 00FF
..... 30067588 00FF
Unlock All Events - France ..30067582 00FF
..... 30067589 00FF
Unlock All Events - Japan ..30067583 00FF
..... 3006758A 00FF
Unlock Sparx ..... 30067584 0001
Unlock All Events - Alaska ..30067584 00FF
..... 3006758B 00FF
MEDAL OF HONOR (Gameshark v3.2)
Invincibility Everyone ..... 8004ACBA 2400
One-Hit Death Everyone ..... 8004ACBE 2400
Infinite Health Everyone ...8004ACC2 2400
Infinite Ammo on Pickup ....D0046IAA A462
..... 800461AA 2400
..... D007DC26 A462
..... 8007DC26 2400
Invincibility (Note 1) ..... D004ACBE 1023
..... 8004ACBA 2400
..... D0055F5C 00F4
..... 80055F5E 2400
Infinite Health (Note 2) ....D004ACC2 A7A2
..... 8004ACC2 2400
..... D0055F5C 00F4
..... 80055F5E 2400
Total Enemies Neutralized ..80039CB8 ????
Unlock All Secret Codes ....800386A0 00FF
Enable All Secret Codes ....800386A4 00FF
Have All Medals ..... 8003869C FFFF
Unlock Missions in Gallery
Mission 1 ..... 800387E8 0001
Mission 2 ..... 80038880 0001
Mission 3 ..... 80038918 0001
Mission 4 ..... 800389B0 0001
Mission 5 ..... 80038A48 0001
Mission 6 & 7 ..... 80038B78 0001
Performance Modifier Codes
Note 1: With this code, Dogs and Objects can't be killed either but soldiers can!
Note 2: With this code, you can be destroyed by grenades and rockets just like normal infinite health but you can only kill dogs and object with grenades or rockets!
```

WE KYPE OUR KODEZ FROM www.cmgscc.com

RC Stunt Copter

Unlock all levels
At the title screen, press ↓, ↑, →, ←, △, ✕, ○, Circle. If entered correctly you will hear a voice say "Cheater's Never prosper"

All gold medals
At the title screen, press ↓, ↑, ←, →, △, ✕, ○, Circle. If entered correctly you will hear a voice say "Cheater's Never prosper"

Mega points
At the title screen, press L2, R2, L1, R1, △, ○, ✕, Square. If entered correctly you will hear a voice say "Cheater's Never prosper"

Long name
At the title screen, press ↑, ↓, ←, →, △, ✕, ○, Circle. If entered correctly you will hear a voice say "Cheater's Never prosper"

View ending sequence
At the title screen, press ↑, ↓, ←, ←, ✕, ○, △, Circle. If entered correctly you will hear a voice say "Cheater's Never prosper"

Grand Theft Auto 2

Cheats
Enter the following codes as a Player Name.

Level select
Enter ITSALLUP
Invincibility
Enter LIVELONG
All weapons
Enter NAVARONE
No police
Enter LOSEFEDS
Display coordinates
Enter WUGGLES
Maximum wanted level
Enter DESIRES
$500,000
Enter MUCHCASH
5x multiplier
Enter HIGHFIVE
10 million points
Enter BIGSCORE
Debug basic scripts
Enter NOFRILLS
To Tune the radio While driving a car that has a radio, press Up to change station.

Knockout Kings 2000

Cheats
Go to the Boxer Creation Screen then press ○ at the Pre-Fight Ranking Screen. Then save your fighter to use in exhibition and career modes.

Fight as Marlon Wayans:
MARLON WAYANS
Fight as Jermiane Dupri:
JERMAINE DUPRI
Fight as O:
O
Fight as a Gargoyle:
GARGOYLE
Fight as Q-Tip:
Q TIP
Fight as Marc Ecko:
MARC ECKO
Fight as Tim Duncan:
TIM DUNCAN
Fight As Ed Mahone:
ED MAHONE

Wu Tang: Shaolin Style

Fatalities and blood
Enter the following code as a password. △, ○, ✕, ✕, □, △, ○, Square.

Send all code submissions to:
EXECUTE
Dimension Publishing
1175 Chess Drive, Suite E
Foster City, CA 94404
or email us at: d3@quake.net

Sweet Tooth's back and in charge of the original car combat freakshow, Twisted Metal 4. With new interactive battlegrounds, *wicked characters*, innovative weapons, killer graphics, a hell-raising soundtrack, car customization and best of all, Sweet Tooth's *evil* henchmen, *Man*, as if clowns weren't scary enough.

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PlayStation

RP

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CAPCOM EDGE
PlayStation
MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

THE SURVIVAL
HORROR GAME
THAT WILL TOTALLY
CONSUME YOU.
ALL OF YOU.
—Next Gen
CAPCOM
PlayStation
DINO CRISIS
CAPCOM
BONUS! INCLUDES
RESIDENT EVIL 3
NEMESIS DEMO
LIMITED OFFER

The 1999 EXTREME AWARDS

Game of the Year:

Syphon Filter

Runners up:
1: Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver
2: Dino Crisis

Driving Game of the Year:

Need for Speed: High Stakes

Runners up:
1: R4: Ridge Racer Type 4
2: Test Drive 6

Racing Game of the Year:

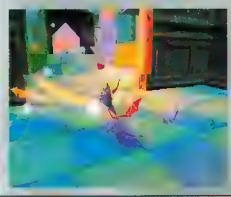
Crash Team Racing

Runners up:
1: Wipeout 3
2: Sled Storm

Puzzle Game of the Year:

Um Jammer Lammy

Runners up:
1: Bust-a-Move 4
2: Ballistic



Action/Platform Game of the Year:

Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage

Runners up:
1: Pac-Man World
2: Abe's Exoddus

Sports Game of the Year:

MLB 2000

Runners up:
1: NFL GameDay 2000
2: Blitz 2000

Role Playing Game of the Year:

Final Fantasy Anthology

Runners up:
1: Final Fantasy VIII
2: Lunar: Silver Story Complete

Fighting Game of the Year:

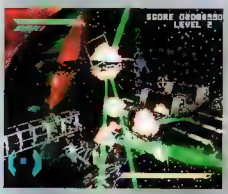
Street Fighter Alpha 3

Runners up:
1: Bloody Roar 2
2: Ehrgeiz: God Bless

Action/Combat Game of the Year:

Driver

Runners up:
1: Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense
2: Demolition Racer



Shooting Game of the Year:

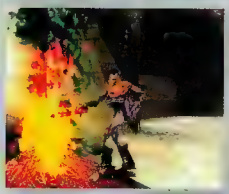
Omega Boost

Runners up:
1: R-Type Delta
2: Tiny Tank

Game Music of the Year:

Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage

Runners up:
1: Um Jammer Lammy
2: Wipeout 3



Adventure Game of the Year:

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

Runners up:
1: Syphon Filter
2: Tomb Raider: Last Rev

Best Graphics of the Year:

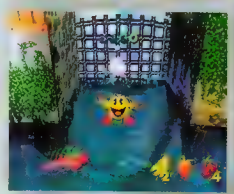
Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage

Runners up:
1: Legacy of Kain
2: Abe's Exoddus

Multi-Player Game of the Year:

Crash Team Racing

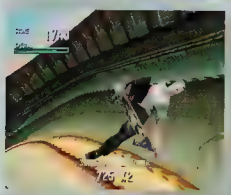
Runners up:
1: Pong
2: Arcade Party Pack



Retro Game of the Year:

Pac-Man World: 20th Anniversary

Runners up:
1: Pong
2: Arcade Party Pack



Arcade Style Game of the Year:

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

Runners up:
1: RC Stunt Copter
2: Rat Attack

FPS Game of the Year:

Medal of Honor

Runners up:
1: Quake II
2: None

editors' year in review

GREG'S YEAR IN REVIEW:

For me, 1999 was a year filled with great PlayStation gaming experiences. The PS had many memorable titles and, while starting to show its age, still managed to "wow" the likes of us jaded game journalists. Some of my favorites for the year include Syphon Filter (my pick for game of the year), Crash Team Racing, Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage, Ape Escape (totally misunderstood, imho), Dino Crisis, Resident Evil 3: Nemesis, Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, Pac-Man World, Medal of Honor, Need for Speed: High Stakes, Driver, Silent Hill, R4: Ridge Racer Type 4, Final Fantasy VIII, Wipeout 3, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater and even Tail Concerto. Like any game system that's been around the block more than a few times, we had to wade through plenty of stinkers to get to the good stuff, but thankfully the sheer amount of quality experiences outweighed the bad. Some of the publishers that really need to be taken to task for their incessant stream of crappy releases include Acclaim (who, once again, seem to have returned to their old tricks), LucasArts (shame on you for ruining such a precious license) and Electronic Arts (in the future, please try and maintain a consistent level of quality throughout your lineup). The biggest highlight of the year was the PlayStation 2 unveiling in Japan and having the ability to play, first-hand, the early software being developed for the system. I truly felt that I was witnessing history take place.

Looking forward to the year 2000, it's obvious we'll see a gradual decrease in the amount of software released for the little grey box. While there will most certainly be some huge titles coming out for our 32-bit friend, come March the shift in focus will fall on the PS2 as it hits the streets in Japan. Be prepared for at least one more round of sports sequels and quite a few less innovative games, as most of the development "talent" makes a mass exodus over to the new system. I personally think that the software hitting shelves for the first half of the year will be some of the best yet. I wouldn't be surprised if Sony doesn't have quite a few tricks left up their sleeves.

It's amazing that we've been playing and writing about PlayStation games for almost five years. What's even more amazing is that I have no doubt we'll continue to do so for the next five and beyond. I know I can safely speak for all of the staff at Dimension Publishing when I say how lucky we are to be able to do what we do. Well, I guess it's time to go make the donuts.

DAVE'S YEAR IN REVIEW

There is, for me, no doubt that 1999 will be remembered for two things: Syphon Filter and the rash of great action/platform games that made it to market. The success of Syphon Filter has been of great personal satisfaction to me as the developer, Eidetic, was also the developer of Bubsy 3D — one of the most maligned and misunderstood games to appear on the PlayStation (and one of my early favorites). Look at this list: Spyro 2, Croc 2, Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time, 40 Winks, Ape Escape, GEX3, Pac-Man World and Tarzan; not a stinker in the bunch. Not to mention the truly great and addictive Crash Team Racing, which, although it is not an action/platform game, certainly gets its inspiration from one. In fact, CTR was my runner-up to Spyphon Filter as Game of the Year.

On the negative side, I will remember 1999 as the year that the PlayStation finally became a dreaded "mass-market" product. What, exactly, does "mass-market" mean? It means a lot of people buying $99 PlayStations and old, $19 software. (Of course, they only buy 1-3 titles per year, so they're not buying that much software.) It is the year where sequels flood the market and there are too many games in any particular genre. This was no more apparent in 1999 than in the sports arena. We have so many football, baseball, basketball and hockey games to choose from that you can become paralyzed in your decision. And, there was no real innovation in any of the games. Without exception, they were all nothing more than roster and feature updates from the previous year's products. Of course, this is to be expected... We'll have to wait for the next gameplay evolutions on PS2.

My wish list for the year 2000; This is tough, because I know that there is not going to be a whole lot of innovation on the PlayStation with PS2 coming to market, but I think there are going to be a few gems to look forward to, particularly during the first half of the year. Although none of these games have been officially announced, it is rumored that Medievil 2, Crash Bandicoot 4 and Syphon Filter 2 will all be on retailer shelves by the middle of next year. If only those three possibilities become realities in 2000, it will be a great gaming start to the new millennium.

MARK'S YEAR IN REVIEW

As expected, most of the big-name franchises returned this year — Ridge Racer 4, Need for Speed 4, Resident Evil 3, Tomb Raider 4, and Wipeout 3 among them. With the exception of Tomb Raider, I found all of these slightly less satisfying than their immediate predecessors. On the other hand, Um Jammer Lammy was much better than PaRappa, and sequels such as Spyro 2 and Abe's Exoddus were also memorable. Perhaps it is because these games were only the second installment, rather than the third or fourth.

I took greater pleasure from new games such as Ape Escape, Pac-Man World, Pong, Medal of Honor, and Tony Hawk. Who would have thought that the Apocalypse engine could actually be used to make a great game? Despite the comments of some critics, I thought that Dino Crisis turned out better than Resident Evil Nemesis. Soul Reaver and Driver were both fun despite the delay and the flaws. I liked Syphon Filter too, although not as much as my colleagues — I just can't get over the funny way that Gabe runs! I was apparently the only reviewer in the world who enjoyed the old-school arcade feel of Rat Attack, but thankfully a lot of reviewers agreed with me that You Don't Know Jack is one of the PSX's greatest party games.

Overall, it seemed clear that the original PlayStation is winding down. Chess, fishing, music creation, trivia, and board games sprang up even as the big blockbusters lost some of their appeal. That doesn't mean it isn't still a good time to get involved, however! At $99, systems should be flying off the shelves this Christmas. Perhaps you're reading this magazine because you finally became a PSX owner. Congratulations! Thanks to dozens of "greatest hits" titles at $19.99, hundreds of titles already available, and continuing (if reduced) software support, the PlayStation will still be

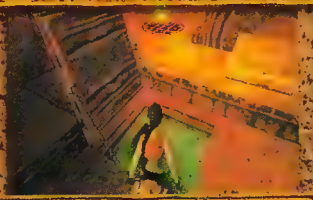
viable for a few more years.
Yes, I bought a Dreamcast and have had some fun with it (Toy Commander, Speed Devils, NFL & NBA 2K) but, like Dave, I don't think that it has much of a future. This time next year we will all be marveling at the new PSX2 games and, if God be willing and if the creek don't rise, I hope to be here sharing some of my opinions, insights, and recipes with you. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

ERIC'S YEAR IN REVIEW
What the heck happened to 1999? The last thing I remember, it was March and I was playing games like MLB 2000 and Baseball 2000. The last seven months have been but a blur, and I can only recall a few memorable events, none of which involves a Dual Shock in my hands. Let's see — there was the mo-cap session with X-Man, dunking on some EGM and freelance guys, driving really fast at Laguna Seca, getting an ally-oop from Jason Kidd, hanging with the QB's in Orlando, playing a round at Torrey Pines, eating a 1/2 pounder with bacon & cheddar with a sack of spuds the size of Rhode Island (only to be outdone by said freelancer), chillin' in Fenway at the All-Star game, admiring the huge Simpsons mural on the FOX Studios lot, getting a phone call from Phil, laying waste to the PSExtreme '75 Ford LTD in a demolition derby, and basically, being driven around in a limo everywhere I went (after having met the limo driver at the gate, holding a sign reading "Mr. Winding"). Yeah, it's been a tough year, and I'm not sure how I'll gather the strength to do it again in 2000. But, I'm a "professional", so I'll just have to "take it one game at a time" and "let the chips fall where they may". After all, I will "give a 110%" and "bite the bullet" if I have to, because, "as you well know", "there's no 'I' in 'team'".
Anyway, I would like to thank some of the game publishers out there for giving us sports gamers something to do in-between watching the real games on TV. Thanks go to 989 Studios for the outstanding MLB 2000 & GameBreaker 2K, to EA for the Madden Challenge & the Live Legends, and to Infogrames for the fantastic Demolition Racer & TD6. Lastly, the frosted side of me wants to say "a job well done" to Namco for bringing back the little yellow guy in Pac-Man World, to SCEA for more purple reign in Spyro 2, to GT for the excellence of Driver, and lastly, to 989 for the ingenious Syphon Filter. Great games all, and worth every minute of time spent playing them!

ADAM'S YEAR IN REVIEW
This year saw plenty of exciting things happen in the PlayStation arena, from the first public showing of the PlayStation2 to the redesign of the PlayStation sans parallel port. As far as the games were concerned, developers did not disappoint. We may be coming up on the end of the PlayStation's lifecycle, but the killer games have not disappeared. Titles like Wipeout 3, Crash Team Racing, Final Fantasy Anthology, Um Jammer Lammy, Syphon Filter, Silent Hill and more have all proven that there is plenty of life left in the PlayStation. Sure there have been some pretty bad games released — Tomorrow Never Dies, Evil Zone, G.Police 2 — but the good definitely outweighed the bad.
The release of the Sega Dreamcast has been a good thing for the PlayStation in that it created competition. Sony and Nintendo can easily co-exist with one another, and the Saturn was never a threat to anybody. With the Dreamcast out and about there is now competition for the ever important dollar, and where there is competition, there is innovation.
Speaking of innovation, we've seen some pretty neat things happen on the hardware side over the last year. The PocketStation was never released in the U.S., but that didn't stop avid gamers from importing the units and it didn't stop developers from putting PocketStation code in their games. The Dex Drive changed the way we look at memory cards and the GameShark Pro made it easy to hack your own codes. Japanese developers started putting "mod-check" code in their games to discourage importers and the importers simply released new mod chips to check for the "anti-mod" software. Sony pulled the PlayStation parallel port, but new cheat devices are already in the works. As the hardware editor here at PS Extreme, I find all of the innovations exciting. Although Sony doesn't like the hacks, the sheer number of them is only a testament to the PlayStation's success. As this issue goes to press we received some information on a device that connects to the PlayStation and allows it to play MP3s.
Looking forward, there are some exciting possibilities ahead. The PlayStation2 is scheduled to hit both the Japanese and American markets in 2000. With DVD playback, digital sound and backwards compatibility, the system has a great deal of potential. Here's hoping that potential isn't wasted. Open note to developers — FMV for FMV's sake is not a good thing. Just because the PlayStation2 can do DVD video, doesn't mean your game has to use it.

ALEX'S YEAR IN REVIEW
You know, way back when, when I was a struggling parapsychology graduate student at Yale, I never would have dreamed that I would end up as a video game journalist, but to tell you the truth, I can't think of a better life. This past year has been, once again, an amazing one for the industry. Of course, the most has been written about the launch of Sega's new machine, the Dreamcast, and the looming specter of Sony's PlayStation 2, but what has been lost in the shuffle is the unbelievable quality of the titles available right now. Tony Hawk, Crash Team Racing, Syphon Filter and a whole host of others are just begging to be played this holiday season. I too am intrigued with the relative success of the Dreamcast and am waiting with breathless anticipation for Sony's next super machine but, quite frankly, I really don't give a crap about any of the hype. I just want that little machine on top of my TV to take me away from all of my more earthly concerns. And weather it's the PlayStation, Nintendo 64 or any me-too machine from Sega, all that really maters is that the games keep getting better and better. We've been publishing this magazine, a labor of love I assure you, for over four years and we've seen it all. Despite an awful lot of uninspired titles, video game enthusiasts have had the ride of their life with the PlayStation. Going back to the beginning, there was Ridge Racer, King's Field, Street Fighter Alpha, Tekken, Motor Toon Gran Prix, Agile Warrior, Die Hard Trilogy, Alien trilogy and a ton of others that still stack up well today. Stack on top of that some of today's stellar titles, like Pac Man World, Syphon Filter, MLB 2000, Hot Shots Golf, Resident Evil 3, Tomb Raider 4 and Crash Team Racing and you've got the makings of one incredible library of games. My point is, before you get too excited about the "next big thing", take a look at what you've got. If you haven't picked up any of the aforementioned titles, do yourself a favor and spend a little of that holiday dough on some true classics. To sum up my feelings at the end of the millennium, I'm glad I blew off a future in parapsychology and became a journalist for the foremost authority on video games. What's amazing though, is that the best is, truly, yet to come. See you in the 21st Century!!!!!

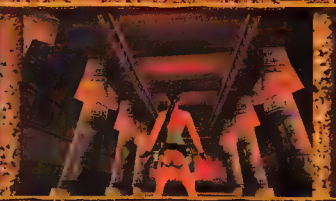
CORE
In ancient Egypt, it was common practice to have your internal organs removed and your brain pulled out through your nose.
Of course ancient Egyptians were lucky enough to be dead first.
PlayStation
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
PC CD



Could the next tomb Lara Croft enters be her own? Find out in Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, her latest adventure. With seamlessly integrated gameplay and FMV sequences, new skin and 3-D texture mapping, diabolical new puzzles and a totally new inventory control system this is a totally new Tomb Raider. Let's just hope it's not Lara's last.

TOMB RAIDER
THE LAST REVELATION

tombraider.com



THE GREAT PSExtreme QUIZ

To celebrate the start of our magazine's fifth year, we present this quiz for hard-core PSExtreme fans. If you aren't the type who has every single issue, don't worry — the first 15 questions are multiple guess!

1. What was the original name of the magazine?
a. PSExtreme
b. Dimension PSX
c. PSX Dimension
d. Winding Brothers' Flying Circus

2. Why was the name changed?
a. It wasn't changed
b. To avoid confusion with a magazine called PSX
c. We didn't like it
d. Under threat of lawsuit from Monty Python

3. Whatever happened to PSX magazine anyway?
a. It became the Official PlayStation Magazine
b. It became PSM
c. It became Nintendo Power
d. It became a beautiful butterfly

4. Our founders also founded what magazine?
a. Sports Illustrated
b. Electronic Fun
c. Game Fan
d. PSX

5. Former editor Zach Meston left to work for what game company?
a. EA
b. Psygnosis
c. Working Designs
d. No company would take him

6. What issue had the name of the month misspelled on the binding?
a. Janurary 1997
b. February 1998
c. Marsh 1999
d. April 2000

7. Which of the following was not a pen name used by Chris Kramer?
a. Chris Kosmo
b. Thomas J.
c. Thomas J. Smithers
d. Iyama Jeannius

8. What is the lowest score we've ever given, and who gave it?
a. 10% to Rattlesnake Red, given by Greg Off
b. 15% to Batman Returns, courtesy of Dave Winding
c. 25% to Batman & Robin, reviewed by Mark Androvich
d. 30% to almost everything reviewed by Chris Kramer

9. What is the order of our ratings, from the category which has received the greatest number of scores to the category which has received the least number of scores?
a. Bronze, Gold, Platinum, Silver, Tin
b. Silver, Gold, Bronze, Tin, Platinum
c. Platinum, Gold, Silver, Tin, Bronze
d. Gold, Platinum, Bronze, Silver, Tin

10. Which one of these games did we not write a strategy guide for?
a. Wild Arms
b. Soul Blade
c. Tenchu
d. The Fifth Element

11. Which one of these games was not featured on the cover?
a. Defcon 5
b. Disruptor
c. X-Com UFO Defense
d. Broken Helix

12. Who has been on our cover the most?
a. Pac-Man
b. Greg Off
c. Lara Croft
d. Crash Bandicoot

13. What animal gets a monthly reference in the small print?
a. Frogs
b. Cows
c. Chickens
d. Ferrets

14. The majority of games featured on the cover have received what rating?
a. Platinum
b. Gold
c. Silver
d. Bronze

15. Which percentage score has been given to the most number of games?
a. 80%
b. 85%
c. 90%
d. 95%

16. What is the lowest percentage score to be given to two or more games?

17. True or False: We have never given a half a percentage point on a game rating.

18. Which editor has given the most Platinum ratings?

19. True or False: We have never given a Tin rating to a game featured on our cover.

20. Which television actress was pictured with Greg Off in a 1998 editor's column?

21. How many Windings does it take to make a magazine?
a. 1
b. 4
c. 5 1/2
d. None, they're all too busy fighting over their Hotwheels collection

22. See if you can match the nickname with the corresponding PSExtreme staff member:

1: Askey	a: Dave Winding
2: Cheeseboy	b: Greg Off
3: Little Buddy	c: Alex Andrews
4: Toolie	d: Eric Winding
5: 'Lackey	e: Tim Lindquist
6: Spanky	f: Mark Winding
7: Chintz Pistachio	g: Susan Olsen-Winding
8: Gutboy	h: Adam Pavlacka
9: Monkeyboy	i: Mark Androvich
10: Skeetch	j: Dave Silviera

23: How many times has Lara Croft provocatively appeared on our cover:
a. Once
b. Twice
c. Never
d. At least three times

24: What "thrilling" software developer did sometime contributing editor Ben "Dope" Cureton leave to work for?
a. Titus
b. Player 1
c. Paradox
d. Black Ops

25: What is the current subscription price for PSExtreme and what special discount do subscribers receive?
a. $21.95 for a year's subscription with a $10.00 rebate toward your next PlayStation game.
b. $19.95 for a year's subscription with an offer for $10.00 for each of our Official Strategy Guides.
c. $21.95 for a year's subscription, six issues free, a free copy of our Crash Bandicoot 2 Official Strategy Guide and an offer for $10.00 for each of our Official Strategy Guides.
d. $21.95 for a year's subscription and a mail-in coupon for a free holiday ham.

ANSWERS:
1. d 2. c 3. c 4. b 5. d 6. d 7. b 8. d 9. d 10. c 11. c 12. c 13. c 14. a (p is also correct if you count the alternate Gex 2 cover of April 1998 respectively) 15. c 16. 22.5% (to Mixmup 9: Alex Andrews 10: Susan Olsen-Mixmup 22: a-The,s been on the cover twice, but only provocatively once. 24. c; 25: d.
Can in Get magazine). 21. d 22. 1: Dave Silviera 2: Dave Mixmup 3: Mark Androvich 4: Tim Lindquist 5: Adam Pavlacka 6: Greg Off 7: Mark Mixmup 8: Eric So: The X-Files, Gillian Anderson (Eric was also standing next to her but was cropped out of the picture. In return, he cropped Greg out of the picture which Monsterism and Xenophobia) 14. Tales-Descent was given 97.2% content of Tim 16. Dave (it's good to be the king!) 19. Tales-Spawn traced out cover in July to 1997

Symptoms of Fear:

Perspiration

Dilation of Pupils

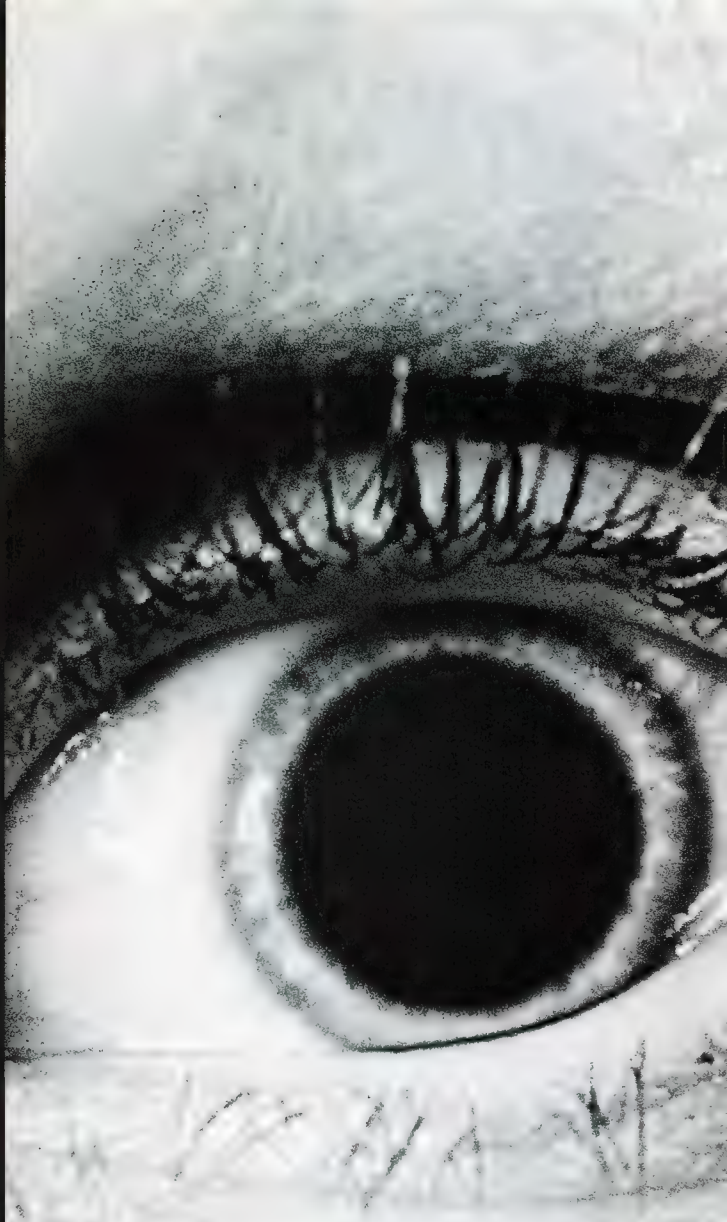
Trembling

Nausea

Loss of Appetite

Dry Mouth

Remember, the only thing to fear is fear itself. Especially in this deadly mercenary mission where your own emotional responses determine what happens next. So go ahead, make your move. Just be sure to keep your fear in check.



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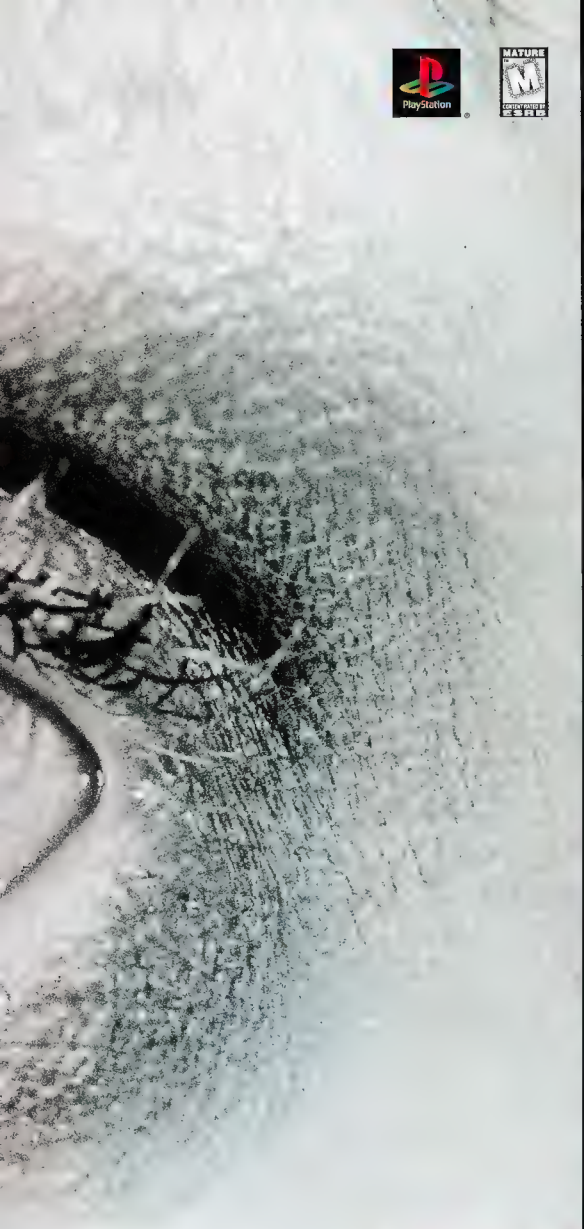
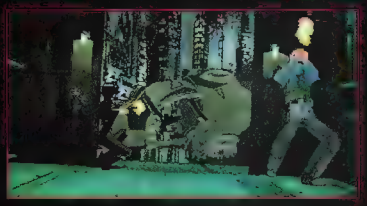
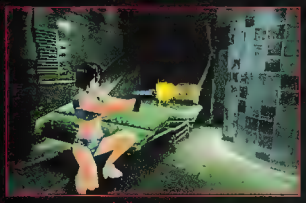




NON-INTERRUPTED GAMEPLAY for more debilitating action and power. Comes in handy for the **THREE RUTHLESS MERCENARIES** whose destinies you control.



MOTION FX TECHNOLOGY. Pre-rendered, fully animated backgrounds creating a frighteningly real world.

Breakthrough **SUSPENSE/ACTION ADVENTURE** game. Beyond your realm of fear. Beyond any 3rd person game created.

fear effect

It can recognize your fear. Can you?

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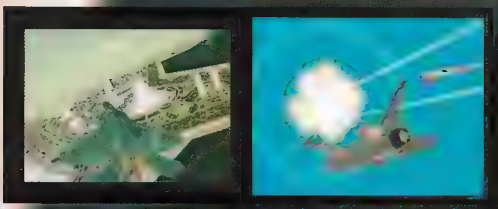
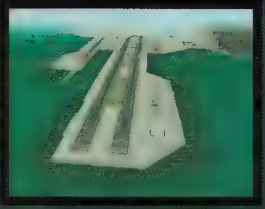
ACE COMBAT 3
electrosphere





When you think of Namco on the PlayStation, you probably think first of Tekken or Ridge Racer. Yet, there is a third franchise that has performed very well in the American marketplace, the Ace Combat series. To date, Namco has sold over 750,000 units of the first two games and is getting ready to bring their latest, Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere, to retail shelves in March, 2000.

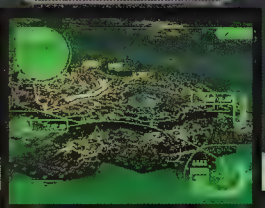
Electrosphere will feature a new graphic engine, both dog fighting and bombing runs, all-new missions and aircraft and a scenario that is set in the near future. The new graphic engine boasts fully detailed aircraft and ground targets, reflections, shading, aircraft and missile smoke trails, moving control surfaces on aircraft, lens flares and spectacular explosions – all delivered at 30 frames per second.

But, the biggest story coming out of this game may be the "Real-time Perspective Control" that Namco engineers and designers are employing in Electrosphere. This system allows players, through use of the Dual Shock, to control the craft with one stick and turn their virtual "head" in real-time with the other. This allows the player to look around the cockpit, attempting to find a target, while flying the craft at the same time. In addition, the game allows for a quick-look feature that will let you know if there is an enemy aircraft on your tail – with just the push of a button.

We have been able to log a little flight time and are very impressed with the improvements made to the game's engine and the depth of its arcade-style gameplay. The game is fast, the combat environments are well-populated and detailed, and the sense of flight is second to none on the PlayStation. With 36 different aircraft to fly, carrying 14 different weapons, and a number of different missions to accomplish, Electrosphere looks to satisfy even the most cynical arm-chair pilot. Look for Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere to be flying high in the new year.

DAVE

published by: Namco
developed by: Namco
percent complete: 90%
release: March 2000



MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

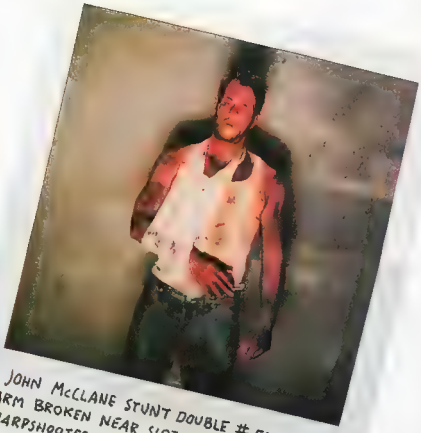
FOX INTERACTIVE

PlayStation

For mature audiences only.

www.foxinteractive.com

JOHN McCLANE STUNT DOUBLE #134
-STEPPED ON PROXIMITY MINE NEAR ROULETTE TABLE WHILE BATTLING TERRORISTS.



JOHN McCLANE STUNT DOUBLE #56
-ARM BROKEN NEAR SLOT MACHINES IN SHARPSHOOTERS DUEL WITH A RUSSIAN TERRORIST.

JOHN McCLANE STUNT DOUBLE #18
-HEADWOUND FROM HIGH SPEED WRECK WHILE ATTEMPTING EXTREME DRIVING DOWN VEGAS STRIP.

THEY COULDN'T HANDLE BEING JOHN McCLANE. CAN YOU?

DIE HARD TRILOGY 2

VIVA LAS VEGAS, BABY.

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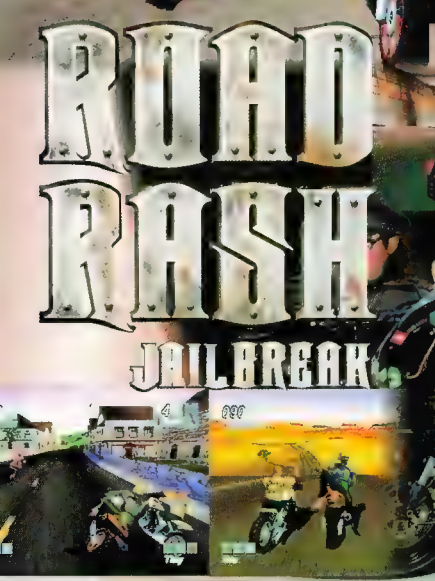
You might notice some changes in Electronic Arts' newest Road Rash since the last time we reported on it. To start with, the name has been changed from Road Rash: Unchained to Road Rash: Jailbreak. This is not simply a cosmetic change due to some marketing bozo who got feedback from a group of focus-testing eight year olds, it actually ties in with a new storyline and, for the first time in Road Rash history, mission-based objectives. It's nice to see that, instead of pushing out a half-finished, unpolished product in time for the holiday rush, EA has decided to take their time with the game and offer up newbies and fans of the series alike a serious Road Rashing experience.

Some of my complaints with the last installment in the series (Road Rash 3D) were the rough and grainy 3D engine, the inability to run back to your bike, and that the fighting seemed like an afterthought. I know for a fact that I wasn't alone. The funny thing is, the game sold extremely well anyway and EA could have just slapped one or two new features into the game and released a successful sequel. I am happy that they didn't. Road Rash: Jailbreak looks unbelievably good, plays extremely well, and definitely strives to go back to its rashing roots, while implementing a variety of fresh and new features.

The following is a list of new additions to the game. To start with, Jailbreak offers up a backstory. It seems that Spaz, the greatest rasher of all time, has finally been nabbed by the long arm of the law. It's up to you to hook up with one of two gangs (the sporty Kaffe Boys or the cruising DeSades) and rise through the ranks by completing various tasks and challenges, thus proving you are ready to save Spaz. Another new feature is the Sidecar Mode, where two players can cooperate with each other simultaneously — the driver steers and fights (and can use his buddy as a projectile weapon) while the passenger fights and leans to keep the weight balanced. Some of the other new features and options include a Five-O Mode — the gamer plays as a cop and must track down and bust the other rashers, a variety of multi-player options — two player split screen, head-to-head, and the ability to play four-player simultaneous with two sidecars and a multitap, a return to emphasis on road combat — enemy AI will be more aggressive, and there are 45 new combo and supermoves that can be executed, an all-new music soundtrack — featuring a group of emerging (read: cheap) bands discovered from a band search/contest EA held, and the ability to run back to your bike.

Currently, Road Rash: Jailbreak is scheduled for release sometime in early 2000. We'll definitely return with plenty more coverage as it becomes available.

GREG



GUT CHECK

- DRIVE SLEEK TRI-POD VEHICLES AT INSANE SPEEDS OF OVER 400MPH ON STATE-OF-THE-ART MAGNO-KINETIC RAILS.
- RACE UPSIDE DOWN OR ON THE SIDE OF 360° MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TRACKS. INCLUDES CORKSCREWS, JUMPS, LOOPS, HIGH VERTICAL TUNNELS AND OTHER HAIR-RAISING ELEMENTS WHERE YOU CONTROL THE GRAVITY FACTOR.
- RETURN YOUR OPPONENT'S LASER FIRE WITH ADVANCED ON-BOARD WEAPONRY.
- GRAB POWER-UPS FOR AMAZING SPEED BOOSTS, SUPERIOR WEAPONRY, MAGNETIC POWER AND MORE.

KILLER LOOP®

PlayStation

KILLER LOOP

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A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH THE DEVELOPERS OF MEDAL OF HONOR

One of the most highly anticipated games of the year, Medal of Honor promises to change the way we look at World War II. Developed by Dreamworks, under the direction of Steven Spielberg, Medal of Honor places you in the role of an Allied solider sent to infiltrate the Third Reich.

Peter Hirschmann, the producer working on Medal of Honor was kind enough to sit down and chat with us about the game, about what it's like to work with Spielberg, how he fared during a day of "boot camp" and more. Pull up a chair, relax and read on for a candid conversation with Peter Hirschmann.

PSEx: What did you do before starting work on Medal of Honor?

PH: Before this I was the associate producer on the Lost World PlayStation game. Before that I was story editor on a game that never saw the light of day, but took a year of my life, and before that I was production coordinator on a PC title called Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair which was the first thing that Dreamworks actually published.

PSEx: What's it like moving from the movie industry to the gaming industry? Are there a lot of similarities between the movie industry and the gaming industry?

PH: There are many many more differences than similarities. The biggest similarity is that you are making a piece of entertainment. Even though games is what I always wanted to do, the experience I had at Amblin was absolutely invaluable because it was a small production company, it was less than 100 people, yet I think it's the most successful independent production company in history. The string of movies that they made – Jurassic Park to Lost World and everything in between – it was an incredible education from the very start of when there is an idea and you get the art department together and you start production designing it, coming up with the look, to actually going into production, keeping on schedule, and then when its finished actually marketing it, making sure it gets out there, and how important publicity is, getting the word out... it was an absolutely invaluable education on how to make a piece of entertainment. What was wonderful about Amblin is that it was all there, basically under one roof. You could kind of see, up close, all those different stages. That's pretty much the main similarity. Making games vs. making movies is as different from making a movie vs. doing a stage play. I think there's a pitfall, and this was more of an issue a few years ago when there were a lot of people in Hollywood who thought, "uh oh, this game thing seems easy, I'll just come over and do that," and you know making a game is the hardest damn thing that I've ever been involved in. It takes so much time and so much effort and there are so many little details. You have a finite number of resources and a finite amount of time to do it. The issues are so completely different. The nuts and bolts of making a game vs. the nuts and bolts of making a movie or making a television show, they're just night and day. The wonderful thing about Steven is that he gets that. He's one of the few people who has been able to successfully cross over his interests into this area. The fun thing about him is that he's truly a game player. I remember when I was a production assistant over at Amblin Steven's assistant tried to limit him to just having a certain number of games in his office because he would literally just blow his schedule out by playing around. His gaming rig is just state of the art. I'm not sure what he has now, but when I was there it was bleeding edge. He plays a lot, he's got a lot of kids who are all into games as well, so not only does he play a lot himself, but he's exposed to a huge breadth of stuff that he might never pick up on his own. When he's over here it's wonderful because he can really communicate clearly and give examples such as, "hey I really like the stealth in Tenchu... I really like some of the stealth in Goldeneye... that level in Half-Life was just my favorite..." It's great because he has the language of being a gamer. It allows him to communicate very effectively with us about what he's interested in seeing.

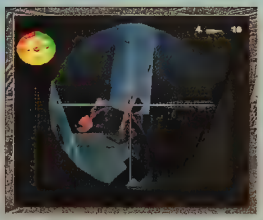
PSEx: What kind of involvement did Steven have with Medal of Honor?

PH: He created Medal of Honor. He came back from wrapping the principal photography of Private Ryan in England, back in November of '97, and he really wanted to do a World War 2 PlayStation game in first person. I have the notes from that meeting taped to my wall. It was November 11, 1997. We knew ahead of time that he was coming to talk to us about a World War II game, but the details were a little sketchy. During the course of this meeting it all poured out of him. Everything from the enemies he wanted you to see to the weapons that the player would have, the reward structure of what medals you got, even the name of the product. He said to me, right in the middle of the meeting, "This should be called Medal of Honor. It's about rising above and beyond the call of duty."

PSEx: Getting back to the game, Medal of Honor is a World War II simulation. Playing through it however, one notices an amazing lack of blood. If the game is supposed to be an authentic World War II simulation why the decision to not show the blood and violence? Isn't war itself a dirty thing?

PH: I think the way you asked that question is really important. For us, you used the word authentic, and that's a key word for us. There's a big difference between making something realistic and making something authentic. If it was a true realistic World War II game it would be days and days of sitting around doing nothing punctuated by moments of sheer terror. The point being we wanted to do something that was action packed. We're making a game first, we wanted to make sure it was fun. The reason we didn't do blood was twofold. One was that our military advisor, Dale Dye said, and Steven made this point as well, the kind of weapons that we're dealing with in the game, when the bullet hits the person there's sort of a dust flare up, the bullet goes through and you don't really see any blood. Blood serves an important part in a game, especially in a first-person shooter. It serves as a great feedback to a player that you've hit your enemy. Quite honestly it was important for us to get a "Teen" rating. We didn't want to make a product that locked out part of the market. I almost think the location based hits we do are almost more graphic than if we just sprouted-out a whole bunch of blood in a particle system. We definitely experimented, there's a pretty robust particle system built into the engine. We did some tests to see how it would

look. We had different people from the company and a couple people up at EA play it at different times and for awhile we tried it with a little bit of blood and then we turned it off. Quite honestly people who played both didn't realize the blood wasn't there until we pointed it out. I think it is actually a very graphic game as far as what happens in combat. There's some artistic decisions that we decided to make and from a gameplay standpoint one of the things we wanted to focus on was making sure the player got the most feedback possible from engaging in the core gameplay which is fighting the Third Reich one solider at a time. You shoot a guy in the arm and he'll shake it off, shoot him in the leg and he'll fall down. That's where we put the majority of our effort. Ultimately once we decided not to go with blood, no one ever really worried that it wasn't there.



PSEx: Watching the game one of the most impressive things is when you throw a grenade at an enemy and instead of running you see him pick it up and throw it back at you before the fuse goes off. What type of effort did it require to ensure that the enemies you were fighting were "smart" enemies? How much work went into the AI?

PH: That is what Medal of Honor is all about. You can ask anyone on the team what the game is about and the answer is it's about taking on the Reich one solider at a time. When you have a team full of really smart talented people there's no shortage of ideas for cool things and cool features. The key thing is to always stay focused so you can deliver what you set out to do with your core gameplay. The focus for us was always on what it was like fighting the enemies. We put a huge amount of effort into the animation system. We wanted to have the widest talent as possible for the code to call on for behaviors. You can have the best AI code in the world, but if there's no animation... If you have AI code in there, if you pull out a bazooka one of the enemies will get scared and run for cover and depending on the height of the cover he takes he'll fire in a certain way and depending on what type of weapon he has he'll react in a certain way... You need to have the bandwidth in the engine to play the animations for all that. From day one our focus was making sure that we had a really really robust animation system that would work with a really really robust AI system. We wanted to make the player feel like they had to think about what they were doing and it wasn't just a button smasher. We always wanted to have consequences. Our military consultant, Captain Dye's biggest thing for us was that your actions have consequences. If you miss with a grenade you had better be prepared to deal with the consequences. They'll either throw it back at you, or they'll kick it out of the way, or one of them will dive on it and save his buddies. That's what we wanted the game to be about – having to deal with enemies that can think for themselves and also work in a group.

PSEx: You've mentioned Captain Dye a few times. Who exactly is Captain Dye?

PH: One of the most important things Steven did for us, and this is right after he gave us the green light on the project, we were fortunate that we were able to put together a demo at the end of '97 that was held together with bailing wire and chewing gum. We actually popped in the disc for the first time in a year right when we were in final test stage and it was kind of a hoot. For those that care, at the end of every mission there is a behind the scenes gallery that we unlock. Near the end of the game we put some early screenshots in there. Right after we did our first demo for him and he greenlighted the project he said, "Boy, you guys have got to get Dale Dye in here." Captain Dale Dye, United States Marie Corps Retired was the military advisor on Private Ryan. He's sort of the industry's preeminent military advisor. His career started with Platoon. He did Forrest Gump. Every really good military movie you can think of in the last 15 years he probably worked on. Steven was adamant, "You have to get Dale Dye in here." It's funny, because I was initially really hesitant. I was like, "I can't explain what I do for a living to my parents so how on earth am I going to explain to this grizzled combat veteran who's seen it all, he did three tours of duty in Vietnam and he was in Beirut, he comes from a completely different world than a bunch of us game geeks." I was just terrified of this meeting we were going to have with him, where he was going to come in and we were going to explain to him what a PlayStation was and what it took to make a game. I thought it would be this awkward afternoon and that would be the end of the grand experiment. I couldn't have been more wrong. He's incredibly smart and a World War II historian in his own right. He came in and within a few minutes just completely got it.

PSEx: What did he have to do with the game? How deep was Captain Dye's involvement.

PH: He instantly understood that the PlayStation is a wonderful platform, but you can't have 1,000 enemies on screen at once fighting out this huge battle. He is able to give a great historical perspective to things. We have a pretty extensive research library, but there are things you can't learn in a book. Someone who's actually had combat experience can really put things that happened in World War II into a really interesting perspective because he can relate to it. He's someone that commanded troops. He started out as a drill instructor at Paris Island and ended up being commissioned and rising to the rank of Captain before he retired. The impact he had is manifested in every part of the game. From a historical aspect he was able to really help us nail down things we were unclear on. We could always ask a question and he'd either have an answer wrapped up in his head or point us in the direction of where to look. Also, the whole notion of your actions have consequences. That seems like the most common sense kind of thing, of course they do, but when you're in combat and live rounds are zooming by just inches from your head, that's an incredibly stressful situation. One of the most important things that we did was to go to a little boot camp that he does. It was an invaluable experience. People learned hands-on how hard it was to actually fire a reload a weapon of that era. More importantly he made us realize what it was like to work as a team under harsh conditions in a really stressful environment. In hindsight it was invaluable to learn how the simplest of actions in a stressful environment become really hard to do and that's how you get killed in combat — by doing something dumb

Special thanks to Peter for giving us his time and to Ann Marie Stein over at EA for helping organize this interview on short notice.

TOY STORY 2

genre: Action Platform
published by: Activision
developed by: Traveler's Tales

origin: USA
# of CDs: 1
available: Now

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

SCORE

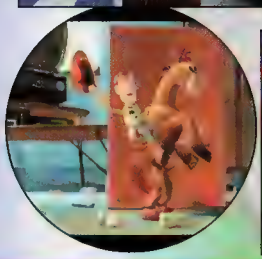
BOTTOM LINE

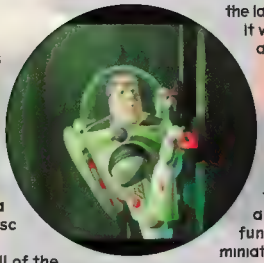
Toy Story 2 is a very entertaining game that does justice to what is sure to be one of the biggest movies of the year. It is a can't miss pick for the 7-12-year-old on your holiday shopping list, and a great buy for all fans of action/platform gaming.

DAVE

I need to start this feature by telling you that I am a HUGE Toy Story/Pixar fan. I consider "A Bug's Life" and the original Toy Story to be two of the greatest movies of all time — animated or otherwise. My only regret in doing this review is that I wasn't able to see the movie before doing it (it opens Thanksgiving weekend and I am writing this on 11/8/99). I also have enjoyed the games that have resulted from these movies, in varying degrees. For those of you that don't know, Traveler's Tales has been the developer of record for all video games related to these two ground-breaking films, on all platforms. Toy Story for the Genesis, SNES and PC was an unqualified success. In fact, it was the first game to take advantage of workstation-style animation on the Genesis. A Bug's Life on the PlayStation was a great game, made even better by the cut scenes from the movie that tied everything together.

That being said, Toy Story 2 is built around the same engine as A Bug's Life. The game follows the adventures of Buzz Lightyear, Hamm, Mr. Potato Head, Slinky Dog and Rex as they venture outside of Andy's house to rescue Woody, who has been stolen by an unsavory toy store owner. As the player, you are in control of Buzz and the many moves and weapons at his disposal. His basic moves include: jumping, climbing, "falling with style" (using Buzz's wings while jumping to get a little extra air and distance), firing his laser, a stomp move, a spin attack, the ability to push objects, the ability to manually control the camera and a first-person shooting mode. In addition, there are a number of power-ups that are activated by finding Potato Head's missing body part in a level. These include: Space Ranger Rocket Boots (they temporarily allow Buzz to travel at much greater speeds), the Space Ranger Grappling Hook (Buzz can fire this to





access much higher areas in the "Alleys and Gullies" and the elevator level later in the game), the Space Ranger Hover Boots (the Hover Boots allow Buzz to fly up to the highest locations in the "Al's Toy Barn" level), a shield and a power disc weapon.

Buzz must fight off all of the evil toys while leading the boys on their search for Woody. In addition, you must find 5 Pizza Planet Tokens in every non-boss level. There are 15 levels in all, 10 of which have PP tokens, for a total of 50 tokens. Early on, you only need to find a few tokens to begin opening up successive levels. Eventually, however, you will need to snag a higher percentage to continue moving through the game. Each level features a token that you will receive for winning some sort of race, one that you get by solving a puzzle, one for defeating an in-level mini-boss, one for finding five missing toys, chicks, or other items and bringing them back to whomever lost them, and the last token is awarded for finding 50 coins and bringing them back to Hamm.

Speaking of your buddies; each of them has a role to fill within gameplay. Rex serves as the keeper of all knowledge. Just find him in a level and he will give you hints on how to find all 5 PP tokens. Slinky Dog will challenge Buzz to a race from time to time, or ask you to negotiate a tight track, etc. Then, there are Potato Head and Hamm, who's roles have already been defined.

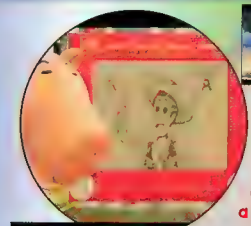
Everything works great; the control is tight, the puzzles are cool, the levels are huge and the entire gameplay experience is one of the most memorable and unique to be had on the PlayStation this holiday season. Yep... it's a great game and extremely fun to play — until you get to the end of it (assuming you are trying to beat the final boss AND collect all 50 Pizza Planet tokens), then you are in for a let-down. Since the game doesn't require that you collect all 50 Pizza Planet tokens to beat it, you would think that there would be some bonus for collecting them all... wrong! You get absolutely ZERO, nada, zilch, bubkus. I can't tell you how disappointing this was. Particularly after fighting the final boss in the game, which is a collection of three of the last mini-bosses that you see. It was a painfully easy battle and then, POOF!, game over.

I have absolutely no complaints about the gameplay over the 15 levels, other than the ease with which you can dispatch of the bosses. The level design is excellent, the gameplay and control are solid and it's just pure fun playing from the miniaturized perspective of a toy — not to mention that you are playing as the coolest toy of all time. In addition, the inclusion of cut scenes lifted directly from the movie (as they did with A Bug's Life) helps to bring the game together and the scenes are, without exception, hilarious. But the ending lets you know that the game had hit its deadline and was simply stopped to get it out on time. Since you don't ever get to the Pizza Planet in the game, why are we collecting tokens? It makes sense that the big payoff would have been some kind of mini-game or additional set of levels built around the Pizza Planet.

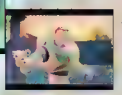
The disappointing ending, or lack thereof, aside, the game looks as good as it plays. The camera can be manipulated with ease, which is a good thing since, if left on its own, it has a hard time keeping up with Buzz as you move him around a level. You never question that you are in control of Buzz Lightyear and it is obvious that TT and Disney Interactive have spent a lot of time making sure that Buzz looked just right. The levels are varied, with a number of large, colorful indoor and outdoor environments that closely follow the movie. It also manages to succeed in an area that few games have — combining the use of third and first-person action. In one of the coolest details to be found in the game, you get a reflection of Buzz's face in the visor of his helmet when you go into first-person shooting mode. (You can also jump to avoid enemy fire in this viewpoint, but can not move.) It is also one of the cross-platform games that shows off the strengths of the PlayStation — I have played and beaten both, and PSX TS2 just KILLS the N64 version.

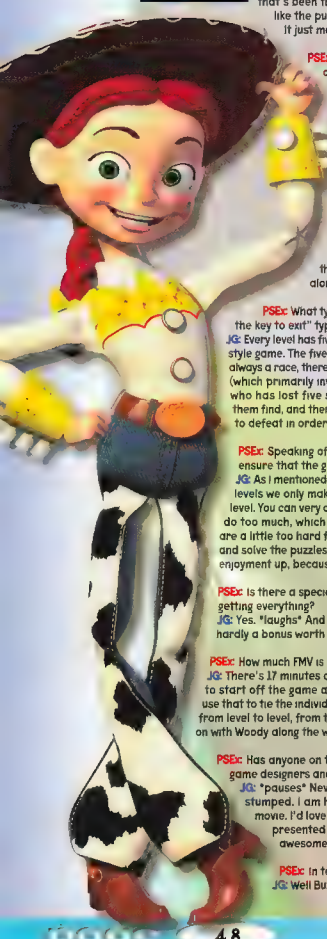
While not an instant classic/Platinum status game, Toy Story 2 is a very entertaining adventure that is tarnished only by its complete lack of an ending for completing the perfect game. It will appeal to all ages in your household and has action/platform gameplay that is unique and fairly challenging. With Spyro 2, 40 Winks, Croc 2, Bugs Bunny and all of the Crash games at $20, TS2 is in a very competitive category — but it is more than capable of holding its own. It is a solid, entertaining game that does the license justice and that will satisfy even the most ardent Toy Story fan.

A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH THE CREATORS OF TOY STORY 2



Disney has always been known for their high quality animated films. But watching a film isn't exactly interactive. That's where Disney Interactive comes into play. In recent years this division of the company has been charged with taking Disney films and making them into fun games. Now that Toy Story 2 has made it to the big screen we decided to sit down and chat with Joel Goodsell, co-designer for Toy Story 2 (along with UK-based Traveler's Tales) and a five-year veteran of Disney Interactive, about Toy Story 2 for the small screen.





PSEx: Why choose Toy Story 2 as a game subject?
JG: Gosh, why not. It's a toy. When you're a kid and you're playing with your toys, you're doing all the things you would want to do if you were that character. I think that's why people really like games that are "it's a toy in a human world" kind of games. They've always seemed to have done well. That's been the big interest with a lot of the other titles and that's been the big interest with Toy Story all along. In this one, Buzz is like the pure action hero, he does everything an action hero can do. It just made sense.

PSEx: So why focus the game on Buzz instead of on Woody or any of the other toys?
JG: Woody has all the introspective, really deep personal moments in the movie. Buzz Lightyear is purely on a rescue mission with the other toys sort of in tow as comic relief. What we decided was that focusing the game on Buzz Lightyear would allow us to get all of the really good action stuff and make a really good action-oriented game. Along the way we use some of the cinema sequences to show what is happening with Woody.

PSEx: Do we see the other toys in the game at all or are they simply in the cinema scenes?
JG: You see all the characters from the first film along with the new characters from the second film as well. Most of them are there to help you out, but there are a few antagonists along the way.

PSEx: What type of gameplay can we expect? Is it platform-based? "Find the key to exit" type puzzles?
JG: Every level has five basic components. The core of the game is a platforming-style game. The five components in each level that are consistent are: there's always a race, there's always a puzzle to solve, there is always collecting pennies (which primarily involves defeating enemies), there is always one character who has lost five something-or-others that you have to go out and help them find, and there is always some sub-boss, some antagonist that you have to defeat in order to progress.

PSEx: Speaking of progression, how is the game gated? What did you do to ensure that the game isn't overwhelming for beginning players?
JG: As I mentioned, there are five things to do in each level. On the first couple levels we only make you do one of those things in order to open up the next level. You can very quickly open up several levels in the game without having to do too much, which gives you a wide variety of things to do. So, if the races are a little too hard for you, but you're good at the puzzles, you can go through and solve the puzzles. That keeps the frustration level way down and keeps the enjoyment up, because you can sort of pick and choose what you want to do?

PSEx: Is there a special ending or a bonus of some sort if you do spend the time getting everything?
JG: Yes. *laughs* And that's all I'm going to say. (The payoff is a short movie — hardly a bonus worth pursuing — Ed.)

PSEx: How much FMV is in the game and how is it used?
JG: There's 17 minutes of the feature film in the game. We use that as a prologue to start off the game and as a reward sequence at the end of course. We also use that to tie the individual levels together so it gives you your continuity of moving from level to level, from task to task. We also use it to tell the story of what's going on with Woody along the way so you keep that parallel storyline.

PSEx: Has anyone on the design team noted the irony in the fact that both the game designers and movie producers are doing everything on the computer?
JG: *pauses* Never had that question before. You just got me completely stumped. I am hoping that they are going to make a digital print of the movie. I'd love to see the very first film that was created all digitally and presented all digitally with no degradation. I think that would be an awesome thing.

PSEx: In terms of the levels, can you give us an idea of scale?
JG: Well Buzz Lightyear is basically the scale of the toy that you can go and buy in any retail store. He is roughly 12 inches high. The very first level, which is one of the smaller levels, is the size of your average house. The rooms are the size of rooms, and it's a two-story house. You go down to the basement, you go up into the attic and it's the whole place so it's quite large. There are other outdoor levels that easily are a good half a block in length and 50-foot high trees that you go up in. There are levels later on that are even substantially larger.

PSEx: What are some of Buzz's special moves? He's got wings, can he fly?
JG: Buzz does not fly, he is a toy. He does have a number of moves, obviously your basic run and jump, but he's also got a wing extension move which gives him a little bit more height and a little bit more length — sort of his "falling with style" move. He's got a spin attack, he's got a laser, and he can charge both of those up. He's got a foot stomp move. The foot stomp move is used to execute all kinds of other little things: catapults, buttons, etc. We add accessories on every level. We start you out with things like rocket jet boots, grappling hooks, hover boots... lots of stuff.

PSEx: Is the ultimate goal to make something parallel to the original film or to make something derivative from the original film?
JG: It completely depends on the individual project. We treat each individual project as a completely whole new thing. If it is appropriate to follow the film to the letter and it makes a good game, that's what we'll do. If we're doing something that doesn't actually follow the film, but maybe just takes place in the world of the film, we'll do that. Whatever is going to make the best product is what we do.

PSEx: How much freedom does Disney Interactive have over the content? If you want to do something can you just implement it or do you have to go through an approval process?
JG: Oh, absolutely. We have to get everything approved. This is Pixar's property. It's their characters, they made the characters. We first go through our own approvals within Disney. Are these appropriate to the Disney mythologies? Does it have a Disney look and feel? Eventually things do go up to Pixar and we show them the game. We show them everything they want to see and as much of the game as we can possibly show them. We've really learned what Pixar likes. We have a great relationship with them. We had very few bumps in the road in dealing with them. They will occasionally talk to us saying, "make an adjustment here, a touch-up there." They've had us change some of the colors for some of the models, for instance some of the newer characters that we put in the game that aren't necessarily from the film. They'll say "it'd be a little more Toy Story if it was sort of bluish instead of purple." That's all fine. In the end it all just makes a better product.

PSEx: Now the PlayStation version of Toy Story 2 isn't the only version. What other platforms will the game be on?
JG: PlayStation, Nintendo 64, PC and Macintosh. All simultaneous releases. We also have a Color Game Boy product and we have two additional PC products, the print studio and the activity center.

PSEx: What are some of the things that you've learned from past PlayStation games?
JG: I think there is a natural evolution of software technology. Everyone starts out with low expectations in the very beginning for that first set of titles. On the PlayStation you saw a lot of cracks, you saw a lot of clipping, you saw the fogging was very close, a lot of pop-on and now we're getting to games like Toy Story 2. There's very little if any clipping. You have to look, if you find a crack you've done a good job of being a detective. Also, there's no fogging. That's one of the best things about this game. If you can see it 200 yards off in the distance, it's actually there. You can walk right up to it and jump right on it.

PSEx: From what you've seen, can the PlayStation2 really push out the visuals? We keep hearing about how the PlayStation2 can do Toy Story-quality graphics. What do you think?
JG: Yeah. It's definitely something that we're all looking forward to, especially at Disney. We have great-looking characters on film and those characters are going to look like the film characters now, if not dead on, really, really, really close. That's something that really excites us.

Editor's Note: Although this interview focused on the work of the folks at Disney Interactive, the developer of the game, Traveler's Tales, has gone unmentioned. They have a long history of producing quality Disney-licensed games for different publishers and platforms. Without their coding and 3D engine, games like TS2 and A Bug's Life wouldn't exist.

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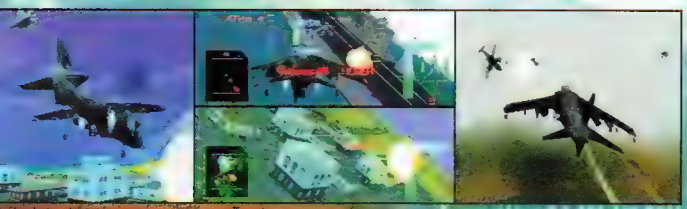

EAG PSX

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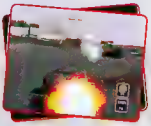
3DO

BATTLETANX 2

january

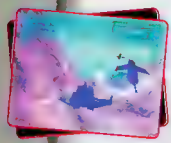
Jealous PlayStation owners will finally get a Battletanx for their system come January, courtesy of the 3DO company. If you're not familiar with this game, then you're in for a treat. Battletanx is set in the future where an apocalyptic event has wiped out 99.9% of the female population. It seems that an evil Queenlord is out to stop you and your faction from repopulating the world. It's up to you and your sparse tribe of loyalists to hunt down this psycho-chick and save what's left of the world. Storyline aside, Battletanx 2 is all about action, intuitive controls, lightning-fast gameplay and edge-of-your-seat excitement. The game offers up a great 3D engine, 11 different tanks with which to unleash massive amounts of destruction, a variety of power-ups and weapons (including a cool, guided missile cam), and plenty of multi-player action. We received a playable version of the game just as we were going to press. Unfortunately, we didn't get a lot of time behind the controls. Expect a more in-depth look in next month's issue"

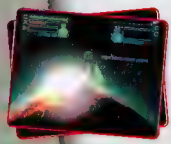
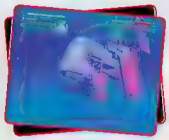


psygnosis

COLONY WARS 3 RED SUN

march



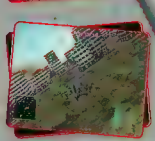
Psygnosis continues the graphically stunning Colony Wars series with its latest offering, Colony Wars: Red Sun. This latest game, developed by a completely new team, takes place during the same time period as last year's Vengeance. While the storyline is being kept a secret, Psygnosis has revealed that your character and his plight will eventually come into the war being waged in Vengeance. Along the way, there will be plenty of new factions, aliens and curiosities you'll come in contact with. In addition to the mysterious storyline, the developers have strived to push the PlayStation's capabilities even further. The graphic engine has, once again, been completely overhauled, offering a greater diversity of craft characteristics, as well as settings. The land-based missions will make a return appearance once more, with even more diverse and colorful locales and backdrops. One of the remaining features left in from CW:V is the branching storyline – you still get to choose where you want to go and, dependent on your success or failure, the eventual outcome of the game. Some of the other new features include a total of 50 objective-based missions to complete, all new ships, weapons and upgrades, the ability to save at any point in the game (in Vengeance, there were a limited number of save opportunities), and more elaborate and dramatic lighting effects. Colony Wars: Red Sun is currently about 75% complete and is scheduled to ship sometime in March. We'll have more information on the game in the next few issues.

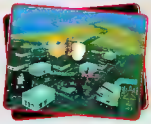
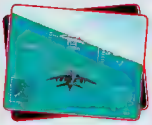
infogrames

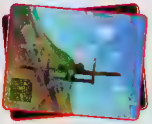
EAGLE ONE – HARRIER ATTACK

january

An underground terrorist group has detonated an electromagnetic pulse device in the air over Hawaii, destroying all lines of communication and rendering U.S. military forces based there useless. The President has responded by deploying a Marine Corps task force led by you, a United States Marine pilot who's code name is Eagle One. Using a multi-purpose attack place, the Harrier Jumpjet, you must take to the skies and regain control of America's number one resort spot. Eagle One features the ability to fly five different aircraft, which include the Jumpjet, an F16 Falcon, an A10 Warthog, the top-secret Raven Stealth Jet and a rescue helicopter over 25 objective-based missions (five per island), some of which need to be completed within a certain amount of time, adding tension to the game. In addition, the game offers two player, split-screen modes, including dogfighting and cooperative play, environmental conditions (such as rain, lightning, night flying and fog) and a special record feature that constantly records and stores the last ten seconds of gameplay for instant replays. Currently, Eagle One is scheduled for release early in the year,





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PC CD ROM

PlayStation

INFOGRAMES

EVERYONE E

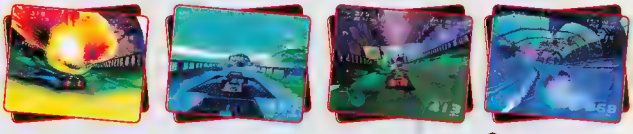
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

psygnosis

ROLLCAGE STAGE 2

march

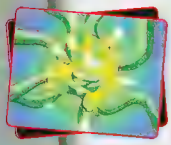
The original Rollcage was a unique and stunning racer where players could literally drive on just about any surface. The sequel, Rollcage Stage 2, takes the concept of 360 degree racing and pushes it to the extreme by providing gamers with more cars, more tracks and a host of new game modes. Like the previous Rollcage, players will get the ability to strap themselves into the driver's seat of specially equipped cars that can flip and spin upside down, yet still continue driving. The graphic engine (which was extremely tight last year) has been tweaked and improved, as has the handling system (no more irritating and disorienting spin-outs), but the main theme of the game has been left untouched. Some of the new features found in Stage 2 include an all-new, comprehensive reward system, 16 game modes to uncover/earn (including Stunt, Rubble Soccer, Survivor and Destruction Time Attack modes), 20 cars to unlock (each with three unique paint jobs), a massive 65 tracks to conquer, 12 new weapons, and five combat arenas.

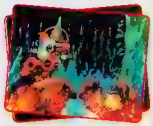


working designs

SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

january





Working Designs' Spaz division is about to ship their latest acquisition from Japan; Treasure's action/platformer Silhouette Mirage. The game chronicles the adventures of Shyna Nera, a "Messenger of Justice" who must travel through the two warring continents of Silhouette and Mirage and repair an unstable and malfunctioning computer system in order to save the world. The game plays like a shooter, but has plenty of unique game mechanics. Shyna can attack by firing special shots which either have the same attributes as her enemies (thus reducing their power and stealing their energy) or special shots that have the opposite attributes (these weaken and destroy enemies). In addition, there are a variety of special moves that can be executed using pad and button combinations. The graphics are decidedly 2D, but there is plenty of eye candy everywhere you look. Working Designs has gone back into the original code and added their own special touches, such as increased difficulty, Dual Shock support, and sharper animation.

acclaim

SOUTH PARK RALLY

january

Acclaim's South Park Rally is shaping up quite nicely and just might re-establish our faith in the license-happy company. In the game, players will have the ability to choose just about everyone of their favorite South Park characters (which include such mainstays, as Stan, Eric, Kiye, Kenny, Chef, Uncle Jimbo, Ned, Mr. Garrison and Mr. Mackey, as well as some of the more fringe characters – Wendy, Jesus, Big Gay Al, Mephisto, etc.) and then take to the streets of South Park in an all out race for the finish line. Instead of just finishing in the top three places, South Park Rally incorporates a variety of mission objectives into the game, such as crossing designated checkpoints, picking up a trophy and making it to the finish, and finding a cure for mad cow disease then holding onto it until you're completely cured. Like any good kart-style game, SPR offers up a variety of sweet weapons and power-ups – Chef's Chocolate Salty Balls, Terrance and Phillip Fart Boosts, Mexican Staring Frogs and, of course, Mr. Hankey – and two player simultaneous loving, er racing. Expect a go-anywhere 3D engine and hundreds of sound bytes created for the game.

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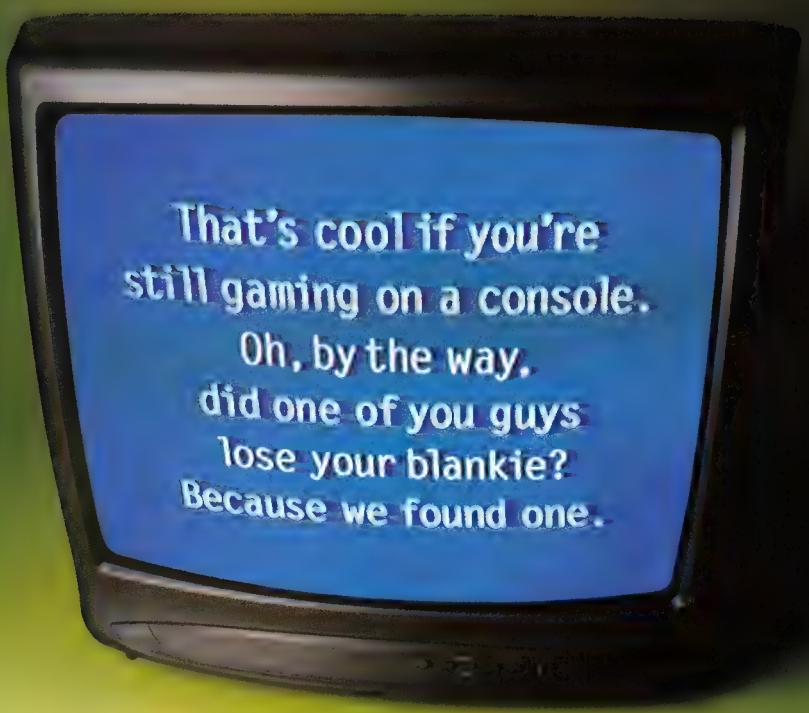

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REVIEWED BY:
MARK ANDROVICH

TOMB RAIDER
THE LAST REVELATION

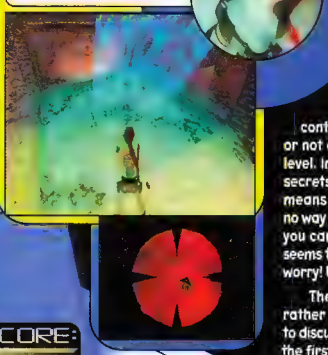
GENRE:	Action/Adventure
PUBLISHED BY:	Eidos
DEVELOPED BY:	Core
ORIGIN:	UK
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

There are few people who haven't seen or heard of Lara Croft, the computer-generated star of Tomb Raider. Yet, although it may seem as though she is everywhere, to date there have only been three games in the series. While the media may focus on her looks rather than the games themselves, few critics would disagree that the original is one of the best PlayStation games ever created. The sense of adventure and anticipation as you explored ancient tombs has never been equaled since. Not that the TR creators haven't tried. Sequels brought new moves, new gadgets, vehicles to drive, and locales as divergent as Antarctica and Nevada. In the process, however, it seems that the original archaeologist/adventurer concept was lost.

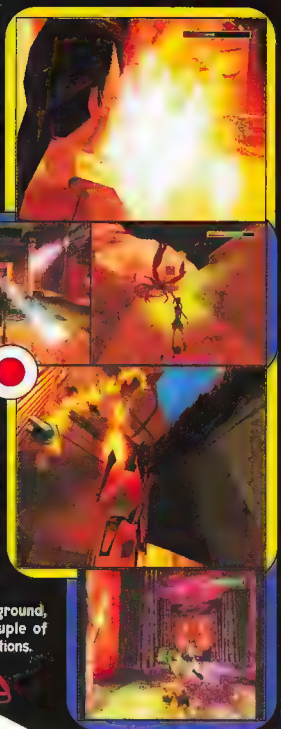
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation has been rightfully described as a return to the series' roots. There is far more exploration and puzzle-solving than in recent games. Instead of security guards, you once again take on a variety of lethal animals and mystical creatures. The action also takes place in a single locale, Egypt, with a storyline that finds Lara accidentally unleashing a great evil and her subsequent attempts to set things right.

The "save anywhere" system from TR2 makes a welcome return, and while the graphics are just as detailed as in TR3, thanks to better level design, they don't hinder your playing ability. New this year is Lara's ability to swing on ropes and climb around corners. Although both are used often, neither has a revolutionary effect on gameplay. The menu ring has been redesigned, giving players a chance to combine weapons and items and select alternative ammo. Again, the effect on gameplay is almost negligible. TR:LR is still primarily about skillfully navigating your way through hostile environments.



In a first for the TR series, the levels are no longer self-contained. You'll have to backtrack into a few levels you've already visited once you've found certain items. There are a total of about 36 levels, but many of them are rather small and serve only as conduits. Unfortunately, level entrances and exits are not clearly delineated. The game may suddenly load another area when you walk down a hallway. Such awkward transitions could have been avoided had the level data been continuously streamed off the disk.

Another downside of abandoning self-contained areas is that you don't know whether or not an item you are looking for is on the current level. In addition, there is nothing to associate the secrets you've found with the area you are in. This means that, if you find 69 of 70 secrets, you have no way of knowing which level the last one is in — and you can't go back to some of the levels at all. If it seems that it is impossible to obtain all of them, don't worry! Unlike TR3, there is no payoff for finding them.



These complaints led me to award TR:LR a Gold, rather than a Platinum, but it is still Gold. I just don't have space to discuss all its good points! Suffice it to say that whether you enjoyed the first game, or are looking to get into the series for the first time, TR:LR comes highly recommended. Once again, many of the levels convey a sense of awe and wonder. You feel as if you are the first person to enter these tombs in centuries, exploring ancient mysteries and relying on your own wits to survive. There are some nice cinemas to watch, reasonably challenging puzzles, cool vehicles, training levels which reveal more of Lara's background, and even a couple of level variations.

SCORE:

BOTTOM LINE

Despite a confusing level arrangement, no payoff for secrets, and an ending that should get its writer flogged, TR:LR returns to the original's successful blend of exploration and puzzle-solving. Not revolutionary, but certainly worthy of your time and money.

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Action/Platform
PUBLISHED BY:	GT Interactive
DEVELOPED BY:	Eurocom
ORIGIN:	UK
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY: **DAVID WINDING**

40 WINKS

GT Interactive is very concerned about this title. They feel that those of us in the gaming magazine business aren't going to get it; that the game is too young (their target demographic is boys and girls 7-10 years in age) and that we are too cynical to get into it. They're probably right... in the case of most video game journalists. But, in my perpetual state of adolescence, they have underestimated my ability to enjoy a game regardless of what the main character is all about; story line, etc., etc.

Like Psygnosis' Rascal, 40 Winks is built around younger kids as the protagonists, struggling against the bad guys in the world of dreams and nightmares (Europeans are big into the Little Nemo style adventures). Unlike Rascal, 40 Winks is highly entertaining, polished and technically impressive (not that Rascal was a bad game, but it did have some major frame rate and camera issues). As a side note; this bodes well for the future of Crash Bandicoot on the PlayStation. For those of you that don't know, Eurocom, the developer of 40 Winks, Tarzan and Hercules (among many other titles), has taken over the mantle of responsibility for the Crash series from Naughty Dog. If Eurocom is using the engine from 40 Winks, and the development team, everybody's favorite marsupial is going to be just fine.

In the game, you can play as either Ruff or Tumble, a brother and sister that are drawn into their dreams in an attempt to foil NiteKap and his sidekick's, Thread-Bear, plot to stop all dreaming by kidnapping the 40 remaining Winks (they are responsible for all dreams). He wants the Winks because, by turning them into Hood-Winks, he will make sure that all children are having nightmares.

The game is built around the kids' house. In the beginning, there is only one room in the house that can be accessed – all of the other doors are locked. Each room represents a distinct area of the game. Each area features three large levels plus the boss encounter. These levels are color-coded: blue, green and red. The color tells you what kind of DreamKey that can be collected in that level. Each area contains 12 DreamKeys: 4 red, 4 blue and 4 green. Once you have collected all 12, you are allowed entrance to the boss level for that area. By beating the boss, you will open one of the other five locked doors in the house. The game design is simple, straight-forward, elegant and extremely playable. The kids can jump, butt-bounce, swim, punch, makes use of a long distance attack, drive different vehicles in mini-games, climb and, best of all, power-up to become different characters. These characters range from monsters and ninjas to jesters and super heroes and give both Ruff and Tumble different (temporary) attack and movement abilities.

In addition to finding Winks and DreamKeys, within levels you must find Cogs, "Z's" and other collectibles. Z's are what keep the kids' health levels up and what prevent you from losing a life. As the kids are attacked, they will lose a certain number of Z's. Cogs are the keys to opening doors within levels. All of the non-boss levels feature four doors: one opened after you collect 10 Cogs, then doors that open at 20, 30 and 40.

The graphics and music are outstanding – equal to the best that the PlayStation has to offer. The kids and the enemies are all well drawn and animated and the environments are detailed and colorful. The game moves along at a consistent 30 fps and you can manually control the camera and go into a look-around mode. On the negative side of the balance sheet, the camera can be difficult at times, particularly underwater and swimming, which you do quite a bit in the game, can be a chore.

Other than those comments, I have nothing but good things to say about 40 Winks. The one warning I will give is that, if you are a parent looking at this game, it may be too difficult for children under the age of eight. And, if you are an adult that has enjoyed Spyro, Crash, Bugs Bunny, GEX, etc., you will love 40 Winks.

BOTTOM LINE

A beautiful looking and playing game that is a great addition to the PlayStation 'Gold' library. In spite of its target demographic, it may be a little too difficult for younger gamers. But, for those of us on the more experienced side of the scale, 40 Winks is an adventure well worth playing.

SCORE: 88%

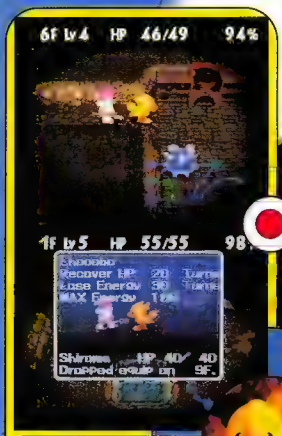
COMPATIBILITY

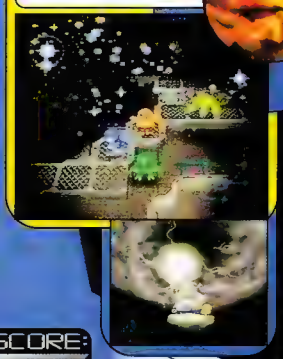
1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ADAM PAVLACKA

CHOCOBO'S DUNGEON 2

GENRE:	RPG
PUBLISHED BY:	Square Electronic Arts
DEVELOPED BY:	Squaresoft
ORIGIN:	Japan
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!


6F Lv 4 HP 46/49 94%
1F Lv 5 HP 55/55 98%
Chocobo
Recover HP 20 Turns
Lose Energy 30 Turns
MAX Energy 1 Time
Shiroma HP 40/ 40
Dropped equip on 9F.



To call Chocobo's Dungeon 2 an RPG is slightly misleading. In truth it is more of a dungeon crawl along the lines of Diablo. In fact, it is probably best described as a child's version of Diablo.

Chocobo's Dungeon follows the adventures of everyone's favorite Final Fantasy character, Chocobo. This little yellow bird, who has been in nearly every single Final Fantasy game out there, has grown a legion of fans worldwide, many of them women. In Japan, the original Chocobo's Dungeon (it was not released here in the States) was a hit, especially among women and children. Square continued the winning formula with Chocobo's Dungeon 2. As the little yellow bird (gender unknown) you are adventuring with your friend Mog (the white puffy character from the Final Fantasy series). The object of your adventure? Treasure hunting of course. The two of you have been searching out treasure and you've finally found a mysterious dungeon. Inside are treasures beyond your wildest imagination, but only if you dare to venture inside.

Like Diablo, the game features an ever-changing dungeon. The levels are randomly generated each time you venture forth. Once you've moved down a level, you cannot go back up unless you are thrown out of the dungeon, exit by use of a spell or are knocked out. Because of this, players are forced to keep a close eye on their inventory. Obviously, you want to keep powerful items at hand, but they need to be balanced by healing items. You cannot simply leave items on the ground and then return for them later. Once you exit a level, the items you left behind are gone. The game does have an interesting method for improving items. Throughout the game are devices which allow you to insert two or more items. Those items are then combined into something new. Sometimes the result is random, other times there is a method to the madness.

During the course of your adventure you'll encounter both friends and enemies. Cid makes an appearance, as does a white mage by the name of Shiroma. They'll help you out in your fight against the legions of monsters in the dungeons.

Visually, the game has a very Japanese look. The characters are all drawn in the super-deformed anime style – big heads and little bodies. The result is a game that looks very "cute." The look will likely turn off some hardcore gamers, but don't be deceived. This game is plenty fun. To dismiss it on looks alone would be a mistake.

For the most part, the control scheme is pretty basic. Chocobo can move and attack in eight directions. You pick up an item by walking over it. There are no separate spell or armor menus in Chocobo's Dungeon 2. Everything is considered an item and it is all accessed from the item menu. Weapons and armor can be equipped from the item menu and spells can be cast by going to the item menu and reading the book. Another nice touch is the battle system. Playing a lot like the original Zelda game, fighting is done by a simple button press. Unlike the old Zelda game though, if you stop moving your enemies stop moving. This gives you time to use the menu system as well as plan out your moves. If you freak and jam on the buttons the bad guys will wail on you, but if you lay off the controller at any time you'll be given a much needed breather. The control scheme works well for this game because it is an entry-level game. This is not a hardcore RPG and there is no reason to have twenty different menus that are only going to confuse a first-time player. Square has done an excellent job keeping the interface simple.

SCORE:

86%

BOTTOM LINE

All in all, Chocobo's Dungeon 2 is a fun little game that is sure to get played more than the hardcore crowd would like to admit. If you've never played an RPG before be sure to snag this one and take a look. If you've got a girlfriend or a younger sibling, this is the perfect game for them. If you happen to be one of those hardcore players, just have your girlfriend buy it for you and then hide it under your bed. You may not want to admit to playing such a "simple" RPG, but you will enjoy it. Call it a guilty pleasure, but for all of its simplicity the game is pretty darn fun.

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

GENRE:	RPG
PUBLISHED BY:	Square Electronic Arts
DEVELOPED BY:	Squaresoft
ORIGIN:	Japan
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
ADAM PAVLACKA

SAGA FRONTIER 2

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

If you've played role-playing games for awhile, you've come to expect the linearity that is found in a console role-playing game. Sometimes the games hide the linearity well, other times it is a hindrance to the game. Regardless, it is almost always there. Console RPGs need to be linear to some degree in order to maintain a tight story. A plot writer can only anticipate so many different options for your character. If you think of something that is not in the game you are out of luck. You can only do what is there.

Square attempted to attack the problem of a non-linear RPG when they released the original Saga Frontier for the PlayStation. The game offered players different characters, and more importantly, different adventures, to explore the world with. Completing one quest did not finish the game, it only finished that section. In order to truly beat the game you had to beat all of the quests. Unfortunately, the original Saga Frontier was more of a mental exercise than a game. While it had the necessary components, the storylines were simply average and the game never really "hooked" the player in the same way that the Final Fantasy games did. True, it was a fairly non-linear RPG, but it wasn't a terribly exciting one.

Saga Frontier II is a lot like the original Saga Frontier in that it isn't a purely linear RPG. Instead of taking one character from start to finish, there are multiple characters for you to follow. Some of the characters have adventures at the same time, while others occur separately. A branching structure in the game allows you to move between adventures every time a major event is reached.

The biggest difference between the original game and the new one is that the new one is simply more fun. Although it is hard to quantify what makes a game good, the story is a major part of an RPG. While the original was lacking in this area, Saga Frontier II is a bit better. The story has a bit more draw and you feel for the characters more than in the first game.

Instead of starting the game off with a big, fancy FMV sequence, Square decided to jump right into the action with this one. The game will start immediately after the PlayStation boots. The title screen won't appear unless the game detects a save on a memory card when the system is first turned on. This way of beginning a game is fairly unique. It throws the player right into the action and gets the game started without any unneeded fluff.

Visually, Saga Frontier II is a step up from the original. The game still uses sprites for the characters, but they have been given much more detail. Characters actually walk around the world now, instead of gliding around like ice skaters. The environments have also been improved, with more detail going into the NPCs and enemies that wander the world.

The game music is still somewhat repetitive, but it too has been improved. No longer does it sound like canned elevator music. The background tunes here are listenable, even if they aren't as memorable as the music from the Final Fantasy series.

Combat in the game is handled via a turn-based menu system. Square's active battle system is nowhere to be found. You can take as much time as you like entering commands and never risk losing the advantage. This is a nice option for strategists who like to take battles slowly. Another nice touch is the ability to save at any time. This allows you to play for five minutes or five hours and never have to worry about where the closest "save point" is. A "quick save" feature even allows an instantaneous save to system RAM so you don't have to wait for a memory card write.

Saga Frontier II has plenty of different items and abilities for the characters to learn The variety is a nice touch, because it allows players to build custom characters. Even though two players may start out the game at the same place, their characters will likely not be the same at the end. This feature also allows for a bit of replay value because you can choose to focus on different skills the second time through.

BOTTOM LINE

Although Saga Frontier II still isn't perfect, it is a lot better than the original game ever was. The branching story and multiple characters make for an RPG experience that is a bit different than the traditional dungeon crawl. Players new to the RPG genre may find the game a bit bland at first, but veteran players will get their money's worth. This is a game that can easily take up your time.

SCORE:

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
MARK ANDROVICH

TWISTED METAL 4

GENRE:	Car Combat
PUBLISHED BY:	989 Studios
DEVELOPED BY:	Idol Minds
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

For those of us that can remember the PlayStation launch, you no doubt hold a special place in your heart for Twisted Metal. Not only was it one of the best games at the time, but it solidified the whole car-combat genre. Now, Sweet Tooth and the gang are back for the fourth incarnation of the TM series.

Twisted Metal 4 is just what one would expect from a TM game — lots of fire, big explosions, crazy cars, insane drivers, and fast shooting. Oh yeah, there is also a storyline. It seems our friend Calypso has been overthrown as czar of the tournament, and Sweet Tooth is now in charge. He has his posse of evil clowns doing his dirty work, if you manage to get through the eight levels of the tournament, then it is the flame-faced ice cream man you get to contend with. Along the way, there is a mess of other rivals vying for the TM throne, including old friends like Warthog and Grimm, and new dudes like Pizza Boy and Quatro. But, possibly the coolest of the new entries is the man who provided the killer soundtrack, Mr. Rob Zombie, who is equipped with probably the best all-around vehicle in the game, Dragula. You can also create your own TM machine, which sounds cool, but is actually fairly limited. You can choose from 3 different sizes, colors, and styles, then you can add options, and finally pick from several weapons and battle cries. A cool concept that would have been even better had you been able to choose attributes for your ride, still, it does work and is a nice feature.

If you have played any of the previous 3 TMs then you will have no problem getting into the game. The analog support is decent, though not very practical since there are a variety of D-pad special moves that are very handy and nearly impossible to pull off with any kind of consistency using the stick. Overall, the control is tight and keeps with the arcade feel you've come to expect from the series.

When you finally get behind the wheel, it will probably take a little bit to get accustomed to the world around you, thanks to the multi-level environments. Once learned, you can add in a bit of strategy by getting up high and fighting more like a bird-of-prey, picking off enemies down below. The one glaring issue is major clipping on several levels and along edges. Not only will you get disoriented, but on multiple occasions, I actually got stuck in a wall and just had to wait to be killed, or worse yet, restart.

On to the multiplayer offerings. When it comes time to strapping a controller in your dad's hands so that you can lay some automotive whoop-ass on him, you get several options. There's the tournament mode where you actually end up working together, so forget that; then there is straight up deathmatch where you can battle it out one-on-one, or add in up to five AI cars to mix it up with. There are wide variety of levels you can battle in, including all eight tournament levels (which may be too large for one-on-ones) and six special DM maps which look like the Metal Gear training missions — just gridlines. Of course, there are a ton of weapons, which all have some pretty cool effects, as do the special attacks.

BOTTOM LINE

Twisted Metal 4 is exactly what you would expect from a Twisted Metal game. It is good in single player mode, and, as with the previous versions, fun for two players as well. As to whether it warrants a purchase depends on just how much you like the TM series. For die-hard fans and first timers, go for it! Otherwise, rent it, check it out, and you will have probably had your fill. Thank you, drive thru.

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Car Combat
PUBLISHED BY:	Activision
DEVELOPED BY:	Luxoflux
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
ROY BASSAVE

VIGILANTE 8: SECOND OFFENSE

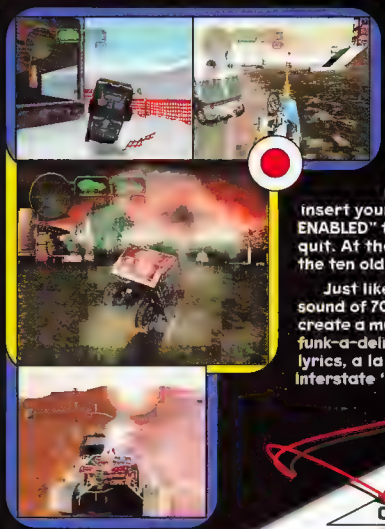
TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Hey, it's all good baby! It's time to go back in time to the late Disco era of the 70s and play the hard-edged sequel to Vigilante 8, aptly titled Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense. Last year's game was set in 1975 and concluded when the Southwest Coyote gang were defeated by the Vigilantes. Now, 40 years later, their evil leader, Slick Clyde, wants to take a blast to the past to rewrite history. With the help of a time machine (duh), he launches himself and a galaxy of futuristic weapons back to 1977, in order to kick up some off-road hell and revenge.

When it came out last year, V8 was one of those games that was split down the middle in the "like" and "dislike" department. For my money, it fell short to the Twisted Metal series, especially in the arcade combat arena. With the sequel, however, I'm beginning to change my tune. To start off, V8 2 has graphics that, unbelievably, are even better than before, and the cut-scenes have Disney-like animation quality. Unlike the first two Twisted Metals, which were easy to drive (because all the cars pretty much drove the same), V8 2 features better and more realistic driving and road physics (which makes controlling them a good part of the battle). The 70s cars feel real — trust me — I drove a 70s Camaro and the one in the game comes pretty close to the real thing. Everything about the original has been tweaked and upgraded. Luxoflux (the developers) have definitely strived to offer up a lot more than just your typical sequel rehash.

The game features nine tracks and vehicles, as well as a variety of secret tracks and cars. Some of the initial offerings include the Palomino XIII that hovers on land, the six-wheeled Moon Trekker, Wunderwagon, Thunderbolt, Dakota Stunt Cycle (think Evel Knievel), Sampson Tow Truck, Xanadu RV and Blue Burro Bus. V82 also features a variety of gameplay modes, which include both 1 and 2 Player modes, Survival mode, a Story mode and an Arcade mode.

Another new addition to the sequel is a built-in upgrade system. It's now possible to build up your vehicle and weapons and create a unique vehicle. Every time you destroy an enemy, you can pick up "points" which are then used to enhance your ride. You can then save your progress to memory card, as well as pit your souped-up car against a buddy's (in two-player mode, you can also steal points from each other). If you can achieve 100% build-up, you could have the phatest, baddest and downright coolest car on the block, not to mention some cool weapons that you never dreamed of.



One of the cooler features that I really liked is the ability to play old V8 levels with the new propulsion mechanisms. During run-time, pop out the Second Offense CD, insert your old V8, wait for the message "V8 LEVELS ENABLED" then re-insert the Second Offense CD and quit. At the level select menu, you can then choose the ten old levels.

Just like the original, V8 2 grooves with the sound of 70s disco. Luxoflux worked hard to create a much better soundtrack full of funk-a-delic bass beats and cooler lyrics, a la Activision's PC hit Interstate '76.

BOTTOM LINE

V8: 2 is a real hardcore car combat game and one that leaves the Twisted Metal series in its current state in the dust. The only bad thing is that it takes a little learning curve to drive these muscle machines, but it's nothing a little practice won't alleviate. In addition, you get better graphics, better music and some new, kick-ass weapons. My recommendation is you put the pedal to the metal and truck on down to your local software store to pick this sucka' up.

SCORE:

90%

COMPATIBILITY

1or2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
MARK ANDROVICH

GENRE:	Puzzle
PUBLISHED BY:	Hasbro
DEVELOPED BY:	Team 15
ORIGIN:	UK
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

WORMS ARMAGEDDON

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

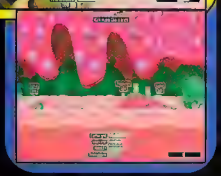
If you missed the original Worms when it came out three years ago, you're not alone. First, Sony nearly refused to allow the game to be released in the U.S. Then, after it arrived on these shores, it garnered lukewarm reviews and made a quick dash to the discount bin. It is a shame that more people didn't discover the game, because it was quite excellent and has developed a well-deserved cult following. Although the sequel never made its way to the PlayStation, the final episode in the Worms "trilogy" — Worms Armageddon- has.

Worms Armageddon is a turned-based strategy game which doesn't take itself too seriously. How can it, when the protagonists are tiny invertebrates trying to blow each other to smithereens? The action takes place on a single screen (albeit a large one), which you can only see pieces of at a time. The landscapes are randomly generated, after which your platoon of four worms is randomly placed on the battlefield along with your opponents. In turn, each player selects a weapon to be used against the enemy. The traditional weapons of worm warfare include shotguns, uzis, grenades, bazookas, homing missiles, and dynamite, but there are also unusual weapons such as baseball bats, sheep, and even a holy hand grenade(!). You can also use items such as ropes, bungee cords, girders, blow torches, teleporters, and parachutes to traverse the terrain. The object is simple — to be the last worm standing. Figuring out which weapon works best in each situation is the difficult part. Do you call an air strike on an area where three enemies surround one of your worms, sacrificing him for the cause? Do you knock an opponent off the edge if it means that you will then be a sitting duck yourself? There are dozens of decisions you'll have to make, and since the terrain and worm placement are both random, every battle unfolds differently.

For those of you who like to customize your games, Worms Armageddon is a dream come true. You can decide how long each turn should last, the energy each team starts with, the number of wins required and so forth. Instead of using the default teams, you can create your own and name each individual worms (for me, nothing beats sending Kirk, Picard, Sisko, and Janeway into battle against Tinky Winky, Dipsy, La La, and Po). With regard to the landscapes, although they are generated by computer, you can choose from 24 different "themes" and 19 different terrain graphics. You can select the number of bridges and objects present in those levels as well. You can even change the sound of the squeaky worm voices to one of 34 different accents including Aussie, Brooklyn, and Angry Scots. Now that is a cool option!

Although Worms Armageddon is best as a multi-player game (which doesn't require a multi-port, since the game is turned-based), you've now got solo missions which you can only undertake after earning medals in training levels. Granted, the missions aren't very complex, but at least this is something new.

My primary complaint is the extremely small size of the text and icons. Even playing it on a large screen TV with S-video, I could barely make out the names of the weapons/objects I was trying to select. Same goes for the timer settings on the grenades. This information is far too important to be relegated to such a small size! As for the background graphics, W:A looks more like a cartoon than a computer game, but personally I prefer the gritty look of the original better.



SCORE:

BOTTOM LINE

For every plus (new weapons, basic training, missions), there is also a minus (illegible menus, longer CPU calculation time, a poor soundtrack). The result is a game which isn't much of an improvement over the original, but which is nevertheless still quite fun.

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-5 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Fighting
PUBLISHED BY:	Activision
DEVELOPED BY:	Paradox
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
DARIEN ALLEN

WU TANG: SHAOLIN STYLE

MATURE 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

If someone had told me that the first four-player fighting game on the Playstation would come to us from Activision, I would have laughed. If someone had then told me it would feature the rap group Wu Tang, I would have fell out of my chair. Finally, if someone had THEN said that it would actually be fun, then I would have needed CPR. Well, here you go. Wu Tang: Shaolin Style, developed by Paradox using a modified version of their infamous Thrill Kill engine, is here. Even though it comes to us with some control issues and AI problems, as a four-player title it's a rip-roarin blast to play. If you happen to be a fan of Wu Tang than the in-game music is an added bonus.

Shaolin Style features the nine members of the group Wu Tang taking on various Shaolin martial arts personas, from Ol' Dirty Bastard and his use of the drunken fighting style (somehow, of all the character persona matchings, this one seems the most appropriate) to Method Man's use of a powerful sledgehammer. Wu Tang has a lot to offer: practice, story and versus modes, a variety of game modifier options, as well as various additional characters, arenas, extra game mode options and fatalities waiting to be unlocked. In this world of political correctness, it also comes equipped with a Parental Lock Code to prevent the youngins from witnessing some of the more bloody actions of the Wu Tang ensemble.

The story mode is advanced through unique-looking beautiful CG sequences. The Wu Tang's sensei is kidnapped by his arch nemesis who has plans of dominating the world. It's up to the Wu to set him straight. Along the way you'll journey to various portions of Staten Island and eventually end up in China. You'll often find yourself teaming up with another Wu Tang member to take on opponents (or one strong opponent) or find yourself alone facing three opponents. In another change to the standard fighting formula, instead of having rounds you have a set number of lives for each encounter. Additionally, each character has 36 items or chambers that need to be unlocked. These range from landing high number combos, executing blocks, throws, and counters, as well as surviving without continuing and defeating certain opponents. In between each battle you see what chambers you've unlocked, receive hints on how to unlock additional chambers, and what hidden features you have access to. You'll often find yourself in situations where you have to deal with more than one opponent. Wu Tang uses an autofocus system where you'll face whomever you are closest to or currently attacking. A quick double tap towards an opponent will switch your focus. Generally this isn't a major problem but, occasionally, when both opponents are close to each other you may experience some slight problems in focusing on the one you wish to attack. Surprisingly, Wu Tang features a fairly deep fighting engine containing combos, juggles, blocks, throws and counters. Additionally, each character features a variety of bloody fatalities proceeded by a Matrix-like still camera shot panning around you and your opponent (déjà vu anyone?).

Though somewhat blocky, characters show a nice amount of textured detail and are animated smoothly. Although the idea of having to hold a shoulder button to block and crouch probably will not appeal to many fighting game fans. Various flips, kicks, punches, and yes, the infamous and often bloody fatalities are animated beautifully. Lots of attention to detail is evidenced in the way these characters move. The Arenas are diverse yet small enough to keep the fighting fierce and well-textured. Walls disappear as necessary to keep you focused on the action. The camera does a good job of keeping up with all of the madness even during a four-player battle.

Shaolin Style features three exclusive Wu Tang music tracks especially created by the group for the game. Various Wu voiceovers and attack sound effects round things out. You'll hear as well as see and feel the impact of each blow.

As a multiplayer game Wu Tang is surprisingly fun. It offers bloody combat, true, but with enough of a game engine to make learning your character worthwhile. The variety of options to unlock and exclusive Wu Tang beats almost make up for the uneven AI progression in the one-player mode. Almost.

BOTTOM LINE

The unique concept may make this game worth a rental, but the gameplay is lacking. We're left with a game that looks and sounds okay, but without any memorable characters or environments it just can't compete with the likes of Gex and Spyro.

SCORE:

82%

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ADAM PAVLACKA

GENRE:	Action/Platform
PUBLISHED BY:	Infogrames
DEVELOPED BY:	Heliogame Production
ORIGIN:	UK
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

SMURFS

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

The Smurfs were classics way back in the mid-eighties. In fact, I'd be willing to bet that most of you probably grew up watching the Smurfs on Saturday morning cartoons. Today, however, the Smurfs are nowhere to be found — unless you watch Saturday Night Live or are a Cartoon Network faithful. With the little blue guys (and one lone gal) keeping such a low profile, it seems surprising that Infogrammes would decide to produce a game based on the license.

Unfortunately, it looks like they just got the license to the Smurfs name, because the trademark "la la" song is nowhere to be found and the video used is minimal. While too much video in a game can be excessive, it would have been nice to see the cartoon intro, before the game began. It would have served as a Smurfy refresher for all those Smurfs fans out there (as well as tugging at those all-important sentimental feelings).

Like the Colecovision version from years back, gameplay in the Smurfs is basic platform style. You play as Hefty Smurf on a quest to defeat the evil Gargamel and save the Smurf village, including baby Smurf and Smurfette.

Controls in the game are basic and bland. You can jump, you can butt bonce on enemies' heads and you can throw "presents" that you find at the enemies in order to defeat them. The upside to this is that the game is simple and can be played by even the youngest PlayStation gamers. The downside to this is that the game is repetitive and will likely bore older players.

The Smurfs only has support for the basic digital controller. Unexplainably there is no support for the analog controller or the vibration function. This is disappointing. At this stage in the PlayStation's life, every game should be using the Dual Shock to some degree.

The difficulty level varies greatly from level to level, which is something that will throw beginning players for a loop. For example, the first level of the game is a cakewalk. When you start the second level you hop on the back of a bunny and race through the level. Only problem is that you don't have much control over the bunny's speed. It is way too easy to run into a firepit or fall down a hole. Once on the third level, the difficulty drops again. If the game had slowly ramped up it would have been fine, but the sudden switching from hard to easy and back to hard again is not a good thing.

While the game does feature voices for the Smurfs, it suffers from the traditional "bad voice acting" found in the majority of video games. The characters are muffled and hard to understand. When Papa Smurf speaks to you, it sounds more like the voice at a fast food drive through window than an understandable person. You can usually get the idea, but you'll never understand the whole phrase.

Surprisingly, the music isn't all that bad. While it won't win any awards, you won't go mad if your younger sibling decides to play this game for an extended period of time. At best it is listenable, at worst it is overly dramatic elevator music. A big disappointment here, as I mentioned earlier, is the lack of the "la la" song. That song is just as much a part of Smurf lore as is their blue color. To leave it out is a huge oversight.

SCORE:

X

75%

BOTTOM LINE

In the end, the Smurfs is a rather bland title which is held up by the license and player nostalgia. Unless you are a hardcore Smurfs fan, or if you have young children in the house (which is the demographic that the game is aimed at), you should avoid this one. The potential was there for an excellent game, but it was never realized. You'd be best served by telling this title to Smurf off and go Smurf yourself a better Smurfing game.

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players
Analog Control Compatible
Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Skateboarding
PUBLISHED BY:	Rockstar Games
DEVELOPED BY:	Z-Axis
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
ADAM PAVLACKA

THRASHER: SKATE AND DESTROY

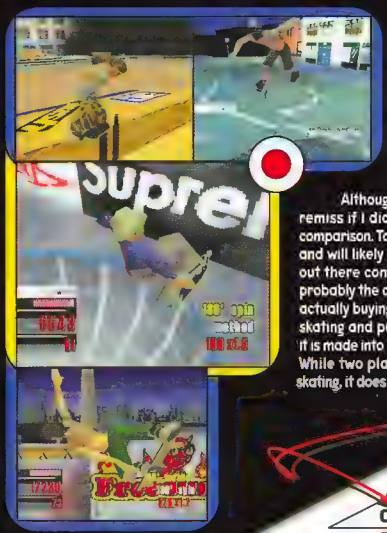
TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

The Thrasher name is most likely known to any avid skaters out there. As one of the premier skating magazines on the planet, Thrasher is sometimes known as the voice of the skating community. It is no surprise then that Thrasher: Skate and Destroy is more of a skating simulation game than a traditional arcade skating game. Whereas a typical arcade skating game places the focus on racing down a track, collecting power-ups and performing tricks, the emphasis here is on exploring your environment and creating your own tricks. For example, the first level in Thrasher takes place in a warehouse parking lot. You have the ability to free skate for as long as you like. You can experiment with combos, try out new tricks, lose a bit of skin and generally have a good time. Once you think you've mastered the level, you will go on a run. A run gives you a set amount of time to react a target number of trick points. If you can score the required points, you will be allowed to exit the level and move on. If not, you'll have to keep practicing.

In the beginning of the game, you only have access to the basic tricks. Just like a beginning skateboarder wouldn't be able to perform the super-spiffy-keen maneuvers, neither can you. In order to learn new moves, you have to master the levels. The more levels you complete, the more moves you can perform. Thrasher also rewards you for variety. While practicing you, can perform any trick as much as your little heart desires. Once you start a run though, don't repeat the same tricks over and over. If you become repetitive, the game will start giving you less and less points for each trick. The only way to stay competitive is to change things up a bit. So long as you keep rotating tricks, you'll maximize your available points.

Control is nicely done, but most players will likely want to start with the digital controls before moving to the analog sticks. The sticks give you more control, but in the beginning it is a bit too much. It is possible to move your skater at just about any time, including when he is in the air. An inexperienced player will likely push the analog stick a bit too far, resulting in a crash on even the most basic tricks. Once mastered, however, the analog sticks allow you to pull off moves that would likely kill you if you tried them in real life.

For the most part, Thrasher is a one-player game. There is a multiplayer mode, but the arcade style two-player race is not here. Instead, Thrasher has players alternate in contests of skill. The two-player modes vary between simple high scores and games such as horse. One fun two-player mode is called sick fix. The object here is to injure yourself in the most elegant way possible. Essentially you need to crash, and crash big. You only have one shot at injury so you might as well make it count.



Music in the game is provided by classic rap and hip-hop artists such as Run DMC, Grandmaster Flash and EPMD. You won't find any gangsta rap here and it's a good thing. The soundtrack is a reminder that rap music was once an excellent art form — before the violence got into the music. If you spent any time at all living in the '80's, you should appreciate the collection of tunes found here.

Although the game styles are completely different, I would be remiss if I didn't at least mention Activision's Tony Hawk game in comparison. Tony Hawk has much more of an arcade feel than Thrasher and will likely appeal to gamers a bit more. That being said, nothing out there compares to the simulation feeling of Thrasher. This is probably the closest you're going to get to real skating without actually buying a board. The problem here is that, while skating and pulling tricks by yourself is fun, when it is made into a videogame it loses something. While two player racing isn't "pure" skating, it does make good gaming.

BOTTOM LINE

In staying true to the skating roots Thrasher: Skate and Destroy has become a game that skaters will love. Unfortunately, the average gamer will likely enjoy Tony Hawk's arcade feel just a bit more.

SCORE: X

86%

COMPATIBILITY

1or 2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
DARIEN ALLEN

WAR PATH: JURASSIC PARK

GENRE:	Fighting
PUBLISHED BY:	Electronic Arts
DEVELOPED BY:	Black Ops
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Over the years the fighting game category on the Playstation has become a bit overcrowded. Then again, at this point in the system's life, what genre isn't? Somewhere in the darkness, however, a voice cried out, it pleaded for a fighting game featuring dinosaurs. At least apparently that's what Electronic Arts must have been thinking. So, in an effort to appeal to that voice out in the wilderness we present for your appraisal, Warpath: Jurassic Park.

Warpath: Jurassic Park comes out of the box looking like a steroid-pumped Primal Rage (now that brings back memories). It features a variety of options from the standard versus mode to practice and team battle modes. It even features a Museum mode where you can view various dinosaurs and listen to historical facts about them (so see now you can tell your mom that playing video games is good for you mind!).

Looking at the features that Warpath brings to the table, it seems that it's equipped with all of the goods. Turning this title on you immediately notice how good it looks. The dinosaurs have all been created using a single-skinning technique. They also show damage during the course of their matches and bleed. The true 3D fighting environments show absolutely no polygon breakup or graininess. Many of the arenas are based on various scenes from the movies from the Dinosaur Pen, to the Cliff where the Jeep plunged off the side, to the entranceway where the T-Rex made its memorable pose down at the end of the first movie. Each arena contains items that can be destroyed, sometimes exploding and causing damage, as well as non-combatants (humans, dogs, etc.) randomly wandering into the Arena. These can be consumed for additional health. Warpath also contains some very nice battle intros. Dinosaurs leap over buildings roaring their challenges and come crashing through gates to enter the fray. Warpath also features some of the most beautiful sound work to grace the Playstation. A dramatic music score adds to the entrances and battle along with assorted growls and groans. Along with a nice selection of dinosaurs and arenas available to start, there are additional dinosaurs and arenas that become available by completely the game. The fighting engine is also pretty strong. It contains various combos, throws, side-steps and juggles. Scoring enough attacks can also launch your dinosaur into a frenzy mode for added damage. To learn the most about your dino however, you'll probably want to spend some time in the game's practice mode (similar to the Virtua Fighter and Tekken series in execution). This mode has a good number of options to ensure you learn various special moves and combos of your chosen dino. You can even have the computer fight in this mode. Control is solid as Dinos respond quickly to command inputs and string together their combos and throws.

Well, after taking at look at the individual components of Warpath, you seem to have all the makings of a solid title. So what's wrong with Warpath? Simply put, it doesn't seem to be fun. Dinosaurs, while featuring their own special moves and combos, are all fairly similar in the way they attack. Collision detection oftentimes can be hit or miss. Computer AI is generally so bland that button-mashing will carry you far through the game before you face a real challenge. Dinosaurs aren't even rendered in scale to each other during the battles. T-Rex is barely larger than the Raptor in this game. I'm a fan of fighting games, and it's always nice to see something different – an attempt to add more to the series of Street Fighter and Tekken me-too clones. The problem here, however, when it comes right down to it is that dinosaurs simply aren't built to be featured in fighting games. Tail swipes, leg slashes and jumping head butts do not a fighting game make. Perhaps that's why they died out.

SCORE: X

BOTTOM LINE

To sum it up, Warpath is a bit of a disappointment. The game is a beautiful title to look at and listen to, with Dinosaurs that approach the level of the original Playstation demos featuring the T-Rex. But, in the end, as in Primal Rage before it, dinosaurs simply don't make good fighters.

75%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Point and Click
PUBLISHED BY:	Fox Interactive
DEVELOPED BY:	Hyperbole Studios
ORIGIN:	UK
# OF CD'S:	4
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
ADAM PAVLACKA

X-FILES

X-Files the game is a point-and-click adventure along the lines of Myst and Riven. This is not a fast action game and this is not something with a lot of explosions (though being the X-Files, a lot of weird stuff does happen).

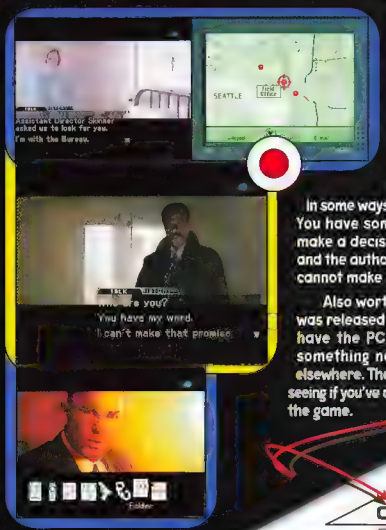
The quick version of the story is that Mulder and Scully have disappeared. Skinner has no idea where they are and you have been brought on the case. Why you? It was sheer luck. Mulder and Scully were last seen around Seattle, WA. Since you work in the local FBI field office, you were tapped to head up the investigation.

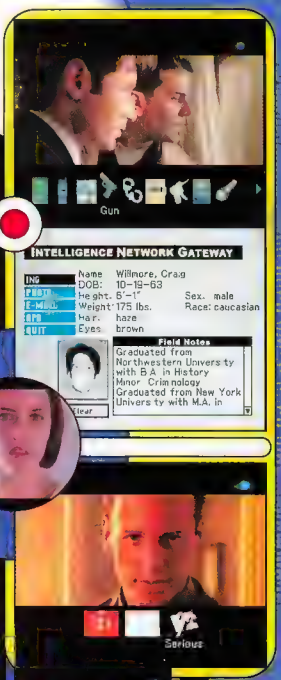
Gameplay is simple enough. As the game begins you'll find yourself in the local field office. Talk to your boss, talk to Skinner and talk to your co-worker. Don't forget to search the office, as well as your desk. In order to advance in the game you have to talk to everyone and search every scene. If you can click on something, you should do so. Although some hotspots don't produce anything useful, others are vital to moving forward in the story. Beyond clicking on the screen and watching the video clips play out, there isn't much to the game. You will have to use your brain a bit to solve a few puzzles, but there isn't anything here that requires an insanely high I.Q. In fact, there is even a nice hint feature built right into the game. Working along the lines of the "hot, cold" game, the hint feature tells you when you're on the right track.

A few other options have been included in the game which are designed to make it easy to play, especially for beginning gamers. There is an option which allows you to jump from hotspot to hotspot (ensuring that you don't miss anything) and the auto-note feature will record any important data for you in your office PC. This way you won't have to worry about forgetting an important clue.

In terms of production values, the game rivals the show. Sure the clips are short, but they are well worth viewing. The video is of extremely high quality, possibly the best video seen in a PlayStation game. With the high quality video comes a price — the game is on four, count em, four CDs.

Everything a die-hard X-Files fan could ask for is in the game. For starters, the script was written by Chris Carter. Essentially, the game is a stand-alone episode in the chronology of the X-Files. Though fans may not take it as gospel (does anyone out there really believe that the events in "Jose Chung's 'From Outer Space'" actually happened?) it is something that they'll want to experience. Most of the major characters from the series make an appearance in the game. While some of them are likely there just to please the fans, they all fit in well. No one seems out of place, and the acting quality is at the same high level that X-Files fans expect. Music and sound effects are also of professional quality. The music from the show is used, and like the acting, the sound rivals that of a regular TV episode.


SEATTLE
Assistant Director Skinner asked us to look for you. I'm with the Bureau.
Who are you?
You have my word.
I can't make that promise.



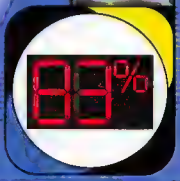
The weakest part of X-Files is the lack of interactivity. The game is a series of branching paths and you cannot go off of one of those paths. In some ways it is much like a "choose-your-own-adventure" book. You have some say in where the story goes, but you can only make a decision when the author wants you to make a decision and the author has also planned out all possible consequences. You cannot make a decision that is not presented to you.

Also worth mentioning is the fact that this game was released for the PC about a year ago. If you have the PC version and are expecting something new, you'll need to look elsewhere. There is nothing worth seeing if you've already played the game.

BOTTOM LINE

As a point-and-click game, X-Files is one of the better options. As a rule, games in the genre don't have much depth so they have to rely on story and presentation to carry them through. X-Files has both of these in abundance. While "Mr. Action Quake" won't want to play this one, the more casual gamers in the audience (and the X-Files fans out there) will love it. The truth is out there.

SCORE:



COMPATIBILITY

1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
DARIEN ALLEN

BOOMBOTS

GENRE:	Fighting
PUBLISHED BY:	SouthPeak
DEVELOPED BY:	Neverhood
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Those folks over at Neverhood must be certifiable. That's the only conclusion I can come up with after playing their newest creation, Boombots. Don't believe me? How's this for a storyline? Evil space cats aliens have kidnapped the world's felines. The renowned scientist Dr. Pick has created super fighting robots to journey the cat aliens world, defeat them, and reclaim our friendly felines. You are one of his creations, a Boombot, and it's up to you to send those space cat aliens packing back to their litter boxes. Believe me, that's just the beginning of a title that will literally have you laughing out of your seat.

The first most noticeable feature about Boombots is how the game is animated. All of the Boombots and their respective backgrounds are actually clay animated figures. Boombots also features some of the most hilariously clay animated cut sequences ever to grace a title, in it's story mode. In the end, however, Boombots is a fighting game, and so we need to see how it compares to others in its genre. Its here unfortunately that things start to fall apart.

Playing like a bizarre version of Capcom's Powerstone, you'll initially have your choice of one of 10 available Boombots. From here, you'll be treated to a cut sequence and receive your orders from your demented creator, Dr. Puck. After that, it's off to battle. Each battle is made up of only one round. Similar to Powerstone, you'll be running around a battlefield collecting charge up items, in this case yellow glowing orbs. Levels contain platforms to jump upon as well as obstacles that can hurt you (including lava). Though you cannot block, you have the ability to jump and double-jump, fire your standard gun weapon, launch missiles and even launch a guide rocket (which you can then take control of and steer towards your opponent). As a defensive measure, you can swat at missiles that have been launched at you, sending them back to your opponent. Hidden health items can also be found on some levels inside portions of the level that can be destroyed. Collecting enough orbs powers your Bot up to full Boombot status, for a limited time he'll do much more damage. Initially there are 10 arenas and Boombots available, with more waiting to be unlocked by progressing through the story mode.

Boombot's hilarious selectable cast includes Male and Female Boombots, a Dog, a Monkey, and even an Airplane. Followers of Neverhood's previous titles may even spot a familiar face or two. All characters are animated very distinctly and generally are large enough to move around in, yet small enough to keep the battle fierce. It also features suitably wacky music and sound effects to go along with it's twisted sense of humor. Boombots each have their own distinct personalities and catch-phrases.

Story mode is initially so outrageous that you don't notice the problems. But they are there, and they do exist with the first problem being the limited number of modes available. Turning on this title presents you with the choice of Vs. or Story mode — not even the fairly standard practice mode was included. Boombots also features no selectable difficulty, if there is an option for difficulty, it's hidden because I was unable to find it. Boombots also features unlimited continues. Then again, with no selectable difficulty, this is probably a good thing. While Story Mode is quite funny, you'll quickly find yourself skipping the various cut scenes to get to the fighting, and it's the actual gameplay that breaks Boombots down. Boombots simply can't be considered a deep title. It's a frantic dash around various arenas in an attempt to survive. Computer AI on the higher levels can be quite treacherous, as some of the smaller characters are virtually inescapable and you'll often find yourself frustrated as the computer shows great skill in breaking out of your grab attempts and fending off your attacks.

SCORE:

79%

BOTTOM LINE

Boombots isn't a bad title. You simply shouldn't pick it up expecting to find a deep, involving fighter. If you are looking for a good laugh, or something that any of your non-fighting game friends can jump into with little difficulty, Boombots is worth a look. However, in this day and age, it's lack of options places this promising title far below the benchmark.

COMPATIBILITY

1or2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Action/Platform
PUBLISHED BY:	Hasbro
DEVELOPED BY:	Interactive Studios
ORIGIN:	UK
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
MARK ANDROVICH

GLOVER

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

It isn't easy trying something new. The pressure is great on developers to make the kind of games that are known to sell. Publishers forget, however, that even the most successful genres were once virgin territory. Glover, an N64 game from last year which has now been ported to the PlayStation, is a good example of a company going out on a limb to try something new. For that, I applaud them. Unfortunately, in this case, it doesn't quite work.

At first glance, Glover doesn't appear much different than any of the dozens of 3D exploration games on the market. The main character, a glove which looks like the Hamburger Helper mascot except upside down, travels through a fantasy world collecting items and slamming the heads of enemies. Been there, done that. But Glover does have a gimmick all its own. The on-screen glove which you are controlling is, itself, controlling something else — namely, a ball. You can push it, slap it, bounce it, throw it, and even transform it into different shapes which interact differently with the level environments. While most of the time the ball is used to hit enemies, you may also need to use it to activate a switch or cross an area of water by "walking" on top of it. Sounds interesting so far, right?

Sadly, the underlying concept loses something in the execution. For starters, in many of the levels it isn't even necessary to use the ball all the time. You can set it somewhere, go destroy the enemies or activate mechanisms, and then come back and get it. Another problem is that the camera gets stuck behind walls or other items so you will have to constantly adjust it — difficult to do while rolling or bouncing. Swinging and rotating platforms only compound the camera problem. Finally, it is difficult to throw the ball with any accuracy. You'll end up chasing the errant ball more often than maneuvering through levels.

Graphically, Glover looks a lot brighter and crisper on the PSX. However, the fogging effects, while not as prevalent, are still present, and there are some clipping problems as well. Despite the fact that the levels fit themes such as a carnival, space, or pirates, they are quite sparse and unmemorable. Neither are the enemies interesting — bosses or otherwise. Only Glover himself has any character.

The control has been "dumbed down" for the PlayStation version. Walking on the ball in water, which was an exercise in frustration before, is much easier. You can even bounce the ball in the water, which you could not do before. There is also an option to have the controller button functions listed on the screen at all times so that you won't slap the ball into the abyss when you meant to dribble it. On the other hand, some of Glover's more entertaining moves, such as cartwheels and on-the-ground rolling, have been removed. Other changes include a new training area, the use of the analog stick to control the camera, and a nice computer graphics cinema which explains the storyline.

In the end, the cool concept of manipulating a ball through a 3D world, changing its shape to overcome obstacles, is overshadowed by bad camera angles and uninspired level design. If you don't need to keep the ball with you at all times or use it to defeat every enemy, what's the point? There should have been many more opportunities to use and transform the ball, or else the designers should have stuck to an obstacle-course puzzle game (such as Roll Away) and abandoned the adventure mode.

BOTTOM LINE

The unique concept may make this game worth a rental, but the gameplay is lacking. We're left with a game that looks and sounds okay but, without any memorable characters or environments, it just can't compete with the likes of GEX and Spyro.

SCORE:

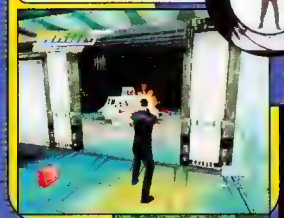
COMPATIBILITY

1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
DAVID WINDING

GENRE:	Action/Adventure
PUBLISHED BY:	Electronic Arts
DEVELOPED BY:	Black Ops
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

TOMORROW NEVER DIES



TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

There comes a time when a game has been in development long enough; a ton of money has been spent, and all the time in the world is not going to make it better. What do you do, if you are a game publisher? You hope that you can recoup some of your losses at the consumer's expense, that's what. You hope you can get the game out before the gaming magazines have a chance to publish a review, or you hope that those who don't read gaming magazines will not revolt against it. After all, the mass market isn't as tough to please, are they?

Unfortunately, EA has decided to pull that trick against the backdrop of one of the most respected licenses, and anticipated games of the past two years, Tomorrow Never Dies. For fans of Ian Fleming's James Bond, the movie was possibly the greatest of the legendary series. In addition, hopes were high for the game, as Rare's Goldeneye was the one game that almost every PlayStation owner coveted in the Nintendo 64's lineup. In addition, the bar for spy thrillers had been raised on the PlayStation by the awesome Syphon Filter and the cinematic gem that is Metal Gear Solid — we should only expect the best for Tomorrow Never Dies. Surely the developer would understand what it was up against, in terms of the competition and would have to be Bond fans... so they couldn't possibly release a piece of garbage, could they? They did.

Tomorrow Never Dies fails on so many levels, it is almost laughable, if not for the wasted opportunity (and the wasted money should you not heed my words and purchase this mess). In an attempt to make the game as movie-like as possible, Black Ops (Treasures of the Deep, Agile Warrior 182, Warpath, Knockout Kings 2000) has tried to follow the basic outline of a Bond film: open up with a spectacular action scene, then cut to the opening credits. Not a bad idea, if it wasn't a substitute for good AI, graphics, gameplay and control. The game is basically a third-person action game where you can shoot in first and third-person modes, pick-up items, throw switches and make use of classic Bond gadgetry. In addition, there are times when the game's plot (the game adds scenarios that were not present in the movie) will require you to guide James down icy slopes on skis, or drive his new BMW 850 and attack a moving convoy. It all SOUNDS good, right? But it plays so bad. The game is never able to pull off a consistent frame rate near 30 FPS. Because of this, the control starts to get real sloppy. Other problems: Enemies standing right next to a guy that you shot won't react; Others will wait for you to turn around and notice them before they begin firing on you; In boss encounters, the boss will have 100 points and you must fire everything you've got at him until the counter reaches zero (you'll end up pumping about 1,000 rounds into the average boss' body); Polygons are clipped and dropped so regularly that you'll almost begin to accept it as normal — to the point where you can be backing up in a room and have the wall you are backing toward come into play, completely obscuring your view of the enemy that is shooting at (and hitting you!), from the other side of the magic wall! Of course, this doesn't include the bullets flying through walls that hurt you, or the fact that, when you hit circle button, which throws switches and opens doors, it will also look to target the closest enemy. If the enemy happens to be outside and you are inside, so what? Have fun trying to open a door if there is somebody lurking on the other side of the wall!

Graphically, there isn't a whole lot of detail in anything. When compared to either MGS or SF, the game looks seriously first-generation. And, the levels are pretty small. You get the feeling that everybody involved in the Tomorrow Never Dies project bit off more than they can chew; including EA, Black Ops and MGM Interactive (the original publishers of the title). I mean, the game and license just didn't get the respect that they deserve. It should have been the PlayStation's Goldeneye, not its Hybrid Heaven.

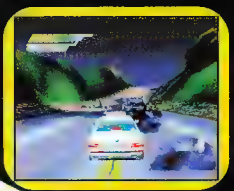
If you are a Bond fan, you are going to want to see for yourself, I know that. But, please, don't actually BUY the game. Rent it, set a match to your four bucks, then have a good cry... weeping for what might have been. EA, MGM and Black Ops could have saved everybody a lot of pain by selling the license to 989, or back to Nintendo. Tomorrow Never Dies is the biggest disappointment of the year.

SCORE:

54%

BOTTOM LINE

It's just terrible. We had the right to expect greatness and what we are given is refuse. I suggest that, after reading this review, you fire up Syphon Filter or Metal Gear Solid as a reminder of what a great spy thriller is all about. For that matter, go get Die Hard Trilogy ($20 and a much better arcade-style spy game), Mission: Impossible (it should be out now), or (in a slightly different vein) the awesome Medal of Honor. Mr. Fleming must be turning over in his grave.



COMPATIBILITY

1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Action/Adventure
PUBLISHED BY:	Infogrames
DEVELOPED BY:	X-ample
ORIGIN:	U.K
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
DAVID WINDING

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

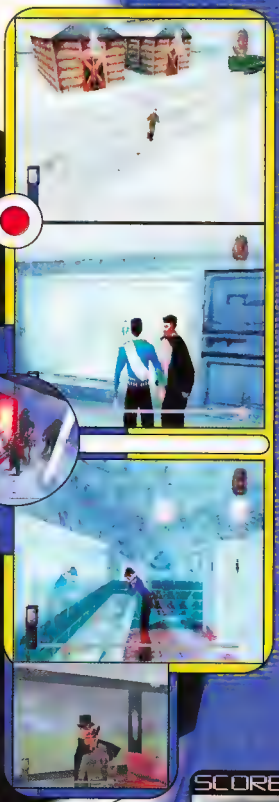
It's been almost two years since Mission: Impossible first debuted on the N64. Although I was (and am) a big Goldeneye fan, I found a special place in my gaming heart for Ocean's spy thriller. Sure, it was a multi-level arcade game and it wasn't particularly pretty, polished or challenging, and it was VERY linear, but it had a certain simple charm that made it fun to play and the individual bits were pretty good.

For the uninitiated, the game, more or less, follows the plot of the hit movie. You play the game as Ethan Hunt, IMF super-agent. Through your cunning, skill with firearms and through the use of cool gadgets like the Facemaker (allows you to assume the identity of another person), you must embark on a series of missions that take you from snow-covered enemy bases to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. The game is a combination of shooting, stealth, a little exploration, a little puzzle solving and a lot of door opening and button pushing. You ride on trains, shoot down helicopters, use a sniper rifle in a crowded train station, toss smoke bombs into the ventilation system at a party, hang from a wire in CIA headquarters and mcuh, much more.

Now, at a time when the Mission: Impossible license is, for the time being (there is a sequel in the works), colder than Thursday's turkey, Infogrames has released it on the PlayStation. It is, essentially, the same game, but it has been wrapped in a much more attractive audio-visual package than is possible on the N64 and it really plays to the strengths of the PlayStation. In addition, the graphics are brighter and more colorful than the original, although the frame rate is hovering around 20 fps and that is, ultimately, where the game's biggest weakness occurs. Mission: Impossible also suffers in comparison to its competition. While it is far superior to the pathetic Tomorrow Never Dies, it is not in the same class as Syphon Filter or Metal Gear Solid. But, this all being said, it is still a fun little game that offers the player a lot of variety, if made a little frustrating by the frame rate issue, which, in turn, translates to slippery control.

The improvements that have been made to the PlayStation version are mostly in the use of CG cut scenes, a ton of voice (some good, some funny, some bad and some that are unintentionally hilarious), and some really attractive glue screens focusing on a simulated computer interface that really bring the whole package together.

If Mission: Impossible had been released on the PlayStation at the same time as the N64 game, I would probably have been raving about it. But, a lot has happened in the international spy gaming arena since then. If the frame rate issue hadn't reared its ugly head, the game might have scored Gold. But, there are way too many times in the game when you die because you can't shoot accurately or you are pushed into obstacles that hurt you because you can't effectively control Ethan. Still, it is worth renting and you may even want to spend a buck or two on it if you are a big-time James Bond fan.



BOTTOM LINE

A nice, simple arcade game with an espionage backdrop. Think of it as Syphon Filter or Metal Gear Solid Lite and you will get a pretty clear picture of what Mission: Impossible is like. The game offers a great sense of cinema, excellent sound and music, bright, colorful graphics and a lot of gameplay variety. If not for the sloppy control, it would have scored higher.

SCORE: X

84%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
DARIEN ALLEN

GENRE:	SNOWBOARDING
PUBLISHED BY:	989 STUDIOS
DEVELOPED BY:	IDOL MINDS
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW

COOL BOARDERS 4

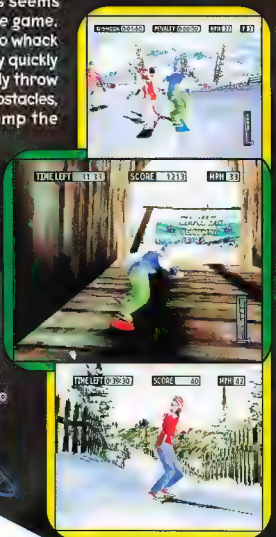
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

A quick whoosh of cold air recently one morning reminded me of a few different things. First, I need to start dressing heavier (think layers), and secondly, that it was time for another Cool Boarders title. I've been looking forward to the next iteration of the series, and this year, Cool Boarders doesn't often disappoint as it adds some new features and improves upon some old ones.

New this year is the ability to select from real licensed pro snowboarders and sponsored boards. If no one suits your fancy, you can also create your own snowboarder and design your board. A fun feature for sure, but a quick glance at many of the current wrestling titles shows that you can go a lot further in giving your players the ability to create their own on-screen personas.

Cool Boarders 4 offers multiple game modes with 3 different levels of difficulty. Don't know one trick from another? You'll want to visit the Trickmaster mode first. Here, starting at the lowest level, you'll be walked through the basics. Pretty soon you'll know the difference between a Melancholy and a Lien Air. Move on to the higher levels of difficulty where you'll learn advanced tricks and see how to string them together for combo's — where the big points are. CB4 keeps track of the number of times you play each mode. It'll even tell you which events have been beaten and which is your favorite mode based on the number of times it's been played (as well as track other statistics). Additionally, further goodies can be unlocked by beating records in various game modes.

When you're ready to step up to the big leagues for competition, Cool Boarders 4 has you covered. Participate in a Single Event, Practice or prove yourself worthy by stepping up in Tournament mode. Each mode takes place in various locations around the world from Vermont to Alaska. In an effort to appeal to some of the more violent snowboarding fans, Cool Boarders now gives you the ability (during downhill races) to attack each other. Not quite up to Road Rash standards, though, as you are limited to simply throwing punches. Like the create-a-player mode, however, this seems like something that was halfheartedly added to the game. Give me a tree limb, a ski pole, another board, anything to whack one of my fellow boarders with. As it stands, you'll most likely quickly forget about the fight option as computer opponents rarely throw a punch. Downhill courses feature a variety of tree and rock obstacles, as well as the ability to ride rails over houses and jump the occasional train or two. Once you've completed an event, you have the option to view a replay. The replays, depending on how well you did, are actually pretty cool to watch as often during stunts you'll get a nice slow motion effect or Matrix-like still camera shot that pans around your boarder in mid-air.



Graphically, CB4 stands fairly tall. The snow effects are well done — you'll even come across soft, deep, snow that buries your boarder almost up to his waist! Riders go through all the motions as they spin, twist, arch their backs and grab their way through the air with board under foot. CB4 is loaded with tricks and they can be put together in a system that makes it fairly easy to control.

BOTTOM LINE

Cool Boarders 4 offers a lot more than it misses in the final reckoning. You won't come back to it for the memorable music or for the deep combat engine. You will come back to it for the tricks, however, and in the end, isn't that what really matters?

COMPATIBILITY

1or2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	BOXING
PUBLISHED BY:	MIDWAY
DEVELOPED BY:	POINT OF VIEW
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW

REVIEWED BY:
ERIC WINDING

READY TO RUMBLE

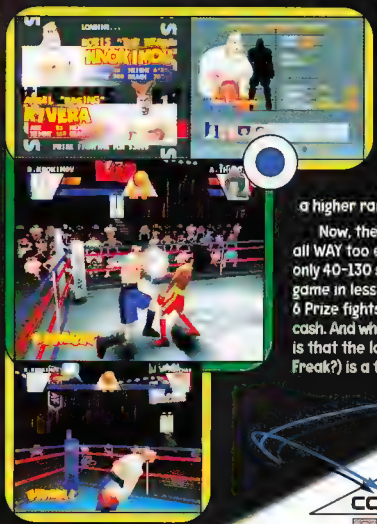
TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Ahhhhh — it's so nice when something new comes in. I have had it up to here (arm stretching really high) with sequels. Shoot, what ISN'T a sequel these days? Tomba! 2, Tomb Raider 4, Test Drive 6, Spyro 2, Resident Evil 3, and every sports game available. It is refreshing to play a game who's name doesn't end in a numeral (of course, that's probably the last time we'll be able to say that about it...). Midway's Ready 2 Rumble is one of the main reasons owners of the Dreamcast bought the system. It looks great, has whimsical characters, and is enough of an arcade game to appeal to gamers across the board. Well, all of those Dreamcast attributes are present in the PlayStation version as well, although I don't think anyone will be persuaded to buy one just to play it!

I must admit, after playing the game for just a couple of minutes, I was so impressed with the graphics on THIS version that I found myself saying "Dream what?". The 16 different characters all animate smoothly, with varying degrees of jiggleness. The fat guys' midsections roll as much as Homer Simpsons' famed belly, and the women boxers, uh, jiggle, in all the right places (borrowing a page from Tecmo, no doubt). But, it's not just the Jello qualities that make the game so visually appealing, it's the whole package. The faces, clothes, and individual personalities make them most enjoyable.

A lot of the fighters' personalities come from their voices, and each one of them has lots to say. Afro Thunder belts out, in his best Chris Rock impersonation, "Somebody better call a doctor" after he finishes off an opponent. Lulu asks "Didn't your daddy tell you not to play with dolls?", and the others all have equally taunting quips. During a fight, you'll hear constant chatter coming from the audience and the two corners. Lots of different phrases keep it from getting repetitive, and the multitude of accents add to the depth (there's even an odd Leprechaun making a variety of comments!).

There are two gameplay modes: Arcade & Championship. In Arcade, you pick a fighter and then try to make it through all ten boxers in each division (Bronze, Silver, Gold). If you start off on the Easy difficulty setting, you'll start in the Bronze division, and the game could last up to 30 fights. If you choose the Hard setting, then you'll go straight to the Gold division and will only have 10 fights. In Championship mode, things get a little more complicated. You'll have to earn money by fighting in Prize fights, where you'll get $2000 for a victory. You can also wager up to $20,000 on the fight, so if you win you'll double your bet plus pocket the $2000 winner's fee. If you lose, you get donut. You'll need the money for two things: training and paying for Title fights. There are about 6 or 7 training exercises to choose from ($500-$25,000). The Title fights start you out fighting the 10th ranked guy in the Bronze division, and you must take on each fighter, one at a time — there's no jumping ahead to challenge a higher ranked guy.



Now, the main criticism of all this good stuff is the fact that it's all WAY too easy, even on the Hard setting. Each fight will last only 40-130 seconds. Thus, you can get through the entire game in less than an hour, even with the extra 5 or 6 Prize fights that you'll need to do to get the cash. And what's even more of a bummer, is that the last guy (a reject B.I.O. Freak?) is a total pushover.

BOTTOM LINE

Ready 2 Rumble is an amazing looking PlayStation title and has tons of gameplay for two players. For the solo gamer, though, the game doesn't have enough in it to keep you interested much longer than the typical weekend rental.

SCORE:

82%

COMPATIBILITY

1or2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY: ERIC WINDING

GENRE:	BASKETBALL
PUBLISHED BY:	989 SPORTS
DEVELOPED BY:	KEMCO GAMES
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW

NCAA FINAL FOUR 2000

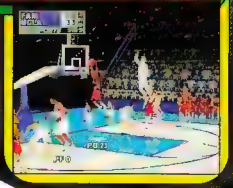
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Earlier this year, 989 Sports released NCAA Final Four 99, and less than 12 months later, NCAA Final Four 2000 has shipped. In video game circles, releasing a sequel 9-10 months after the original is unheard of. Therefore, it shouldn't come as a big shock to find out not a whole-heck-of-a-lot has changed between 99 & 2000.

Last year, we (specifically, me) gave FF99 a 92% based on the fact that the game was quick paced, high scoring, and generally fluid. Well, all of those traits are still in the game, yet somehow the whole package seems dated. Generally speaking, I think the first release of any fun-to-play title scores better with the critics than will sequels that don't offer significant new features. And, this is certainly the case with FF2K, as you'll notice if you glance down at the score below. The reasons for this, however, are many, so let's take a look and see what's going on with FF2K.

First of all, the goofy "ball physics" are still there. You know, the ball goes about halfway down the hoop when, all of a sudden, it shoots straight up into the air (higher than the top of the backboard) and floats around like one of those lottery ping-pong balls. Next, although new animations have been added to this years' game, the core animations, like shooting and rebounding, still look awkward. In fact, the dunk animations, with the exception of a few, are just plain lame. Guys look like they're getting six inches off the ground, yet their arms transform into these five foot long meat hooks that allow them to throw it down. And, for the love of Bob Cousy, why is it that the 5'10" white-guy-point guard-from VMI (of all places) can easily drive the lane and do monster dunks time after time? And, not only does he jam at will, he also gets in amongst the trees and throws down some rim-shaking tip-jams! Before you think that this dude must be a stud of unearthly proportions, I must inform you that EVERYBODY can throw it down, regardless of size or ability. Obviously, on the sim side of things, this isn't very "realistic", although I hate using that word because video games aren't s'posed to be realistic, they're s'posed to be FUN. In this case, however, I make an exception because it is, in my opinion, more "fun" having hoop players that have some limitations. After all, not everyone can dunk, just like not everyone can hit a 500 foot homer, or do the 40 yard dash in 4 seconds!

Despite these obvious shortcomings, Final Four 2000 is still a good game of college hoops. There's plenty of buttons to manipulate, be it for Icon Cutting, Icon Passing, Icon Screening, Icon Hear You (oh, wait, just made that last one up), Alley Oops, calling a play, taunting the opponent, or "cherry picking". Yes, there's a button for everything — you can even choose to do certain things with the ball at the free throw line (dribble, spin the ball in your hand, or bounce the ball back to yourself). The one button that I would like to see change, however, is the "pump fake" button. In order to do this, you must hit the "triangle" button, then quickly hit the 'X' button to shoot. What makes it difficult to pull-off correctly is that the defense generally recovers from your fake before you can slide your finger down and shoot the ball, thus negating the head fake in the first place!



SCORE:

BOTTOM LINE

NCAA Final Four 2000 is a sequel that suffers from a lack of new ideas and no improvements of old flaws that make the entire experience less satisfying than it was originally. However, FF2K still has lots of fine features and decent gameplay, so if you missed out on the title last year, then you may want to check this out.

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players

Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	RACING
PUBLISHED BY:	EA
DEVELOPED BY:	INFOGRAMES
ORIGIN:	UK
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW

REVIEWED BY:
ALEX ANDREWS

V-RALLY 2

EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Ah.....another rally type racing game. I just got over TOCA2; I'm really not in the mood to look at another one right now. However, being the consummate professional that I am, I have happily undertaken this review with the zest that has come to be my trademark. Ever since the PlayStaton launched four years ago, the game developers have been trying to create a PlayStation version of Sega's classic arcade game, Sega Rally. Just about every publisher of note has tried their hand in this arena and all have come up short. The most excruciating games have come from the European developers whose style of gameplay just doesn't sit well with American gamers. The original V-Rally was a major disappointment that suffered from the all too familiar control issues inherent in rally type games. Well, V Rally presented by Need For Speed (What the heck.....) is the latest attempt to recreate the magic. In case you're wondering about the name, Infograms developed the title and EA is distributing it in North America. Apparently they think the Need For Speed franchise can sell rally games. It didn't work for the N64, we'll have to wait to see about the PlayStation version.

Let's start with the set up. Like most rally type games, the racing environment is absolutely huge. You have your choice of four styles of racing; arcade, V Rally Trophy, Championship and time trial. Within each category you have multiple circuits with a varying number of rallies in each circuit. After you've chosen your car (eight initially) and customized it to your liking, you can begin on your pursuit of the cup. the V Rally Trophy mode is your standard sim set up with multiple lap races spread across Europe. There are four cars on the track and in addition to having to complete the laps, the courses are also check point based. The championship circuit is check point-based only and requires two stages on each track. There is only one car on the track at a time. The arcade and time trial modes are fairly self explanatory. Since most of you who might be interested in this game won't be spending much time on those two modes, neither will I.

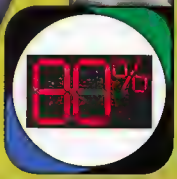
Like every rally type game that has come before it, the big issue with VRally 2 is the control. At first, when I started playing the Trophy mode, the control was similar to the rest of the rally games on the market. Sloppy that is. Once again, here we go rolling over at 40 mph. I can't tell you how frustrating that is. I don't know how our European brethren can handle it. After struggling through a few hours of that, I switched to the Championship mode which proved to be much more user friendly. Of course, there is only one car on the screen at a time which certainly makes a difference, but the control is also a lot more manageable. In this mode, V Rally 2 is actually the most enjoyable rally type game I've played in a long time. I just wish the Trophy mode was as agreeable. The control issues aside, the other big factor is the AI.

In the trophy mode, the AI is relatively fair; however, if you fall behind at the beginning of a race, you're not going to catch up. In the Championship mode; it's almost impossible to come in anything but first or second. There doesn't seem to be a happy medium here. it's either too easy or a little too hard. As it turned out, even with the sloppy control, I preferred playing the Trophy mode as it was considerably more challenging.

BOTTOM LINE

In the end, V Rally 2 turned out to be a much more pleasant experience than I had first imagined. The depth, frame rate and graphic excellence distinguish it among its peers, but the all too present control and AI issues keep it from making it an unqualified recommendation. Check it out if you're into the rally games; if it you're just a general racing enthusiast, however, rent it first.

SCORE:



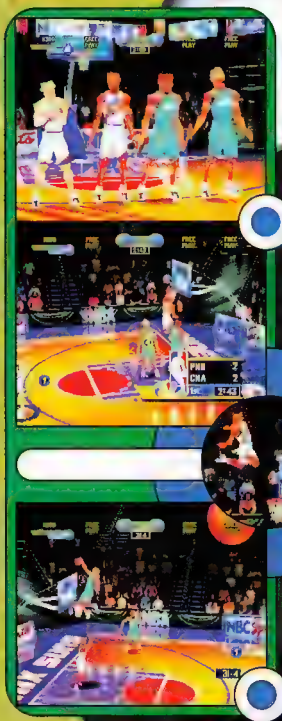
COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY: ERIC WINDING

GENRE:	BASKETBALL
PUBLISHED BY:	MIDWAY
DEVELOPED BY:	EUROCOM
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW

NBA SHOWTIME: NBA ON NBC



EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Midway continues to use their arcade heritage to forge new products into the home console arena. Their latest arcade hit, NBA Showtime, is now available for the PlayStation (as well as the Dreamcast and Nintendo 64).

Most of you have played the two-on-two arcade game NBA Jam at some time in your lives, be it in the arcade or on one of the home systems. In fact, Acclaim released NBA Jam Tournament Edition for the PlayStation more than four years ago, and Midway released a similar arcade game called NBA Hang Time shortly thereafter. So, it's possible that you've even played the game on this system! A lot of things have changed over the past four years, however, and one of them is that Midway is still making arcade games and PSX games, while the Jam series is limited to the N64.

Of course, one thing that hasn't changed during all this time is that the computer AI is still the same ol' computer AI. You know what I'm talking about — you're up by two with 1.5 seconds left, and you KNOW you're going to lose. The uninitiated of you ask "why"? Because, Detlef, the computer will more than likely always make that last second heave from 80 feet, as sure as death and taxes. If that's all there were to the AI problem, it would be bad enough. But, it isn't. What also happens is that if you're up by more than 3-4 points with less than a minute left, you all of a sudden won't be able to make that easy pass to the WIDE open teammate (you repeatedly hit the "pass" button, but get no love) or you attempt a routine dunk (one that you've already successfully done 20 times) and instead, the computer puts you into a crazy "shot" animation, and you miss badly. If you're knew to this two-on-two arcade-style game, then you'll immediately cry foul and chuck the controller into the nearest wall. If you know the game all too well, then you'll either except it and try to deal with it the best you can, or you'll be like this reviewer and only break out the game when you can play against human opponents.

Other than the fact that the computer AI has to be seriously overhauled if Midway is to continue to make Showtime a franchise, the game doesn't seem to have any other flaws. That is, until you try to play the game in a fashion other than "just like the arcade game". For example, if you want a practice mode, or a season mode, or anything other than the arcade experience, then you'll have to look elsewhere, 'cause it's not in here. Which, if the game were a better one player experience, wouldn't be too horribly wrong. But, it's not, so it is (you catching what The Doctor is hurling?).

There is a create-a-player mode that adds some depth to the game, and you can continue to add attribute points to your characters' skill categories (speed, dribbling, 3 pointers, blocks, steals, etc.) by winning three games. After the third win, you can go in and add the additional attribute points, or change the other settings around. It sounds cool, but with your potential to make a basket dictated more on the current score of the game than on your players' actual shooting ability, you soon get the feeling of "why bother?"

BOTTOM LINE

Midway has given PlayStation owners a fine translation of their arcade game, and if that's all you want, then you should be quite happy with your purchase. Personally, I can do without the same old tired play mechanics. If, like me, you're looking for a better two-on-two experience, then your wait will continue.

COMPATIBILITY

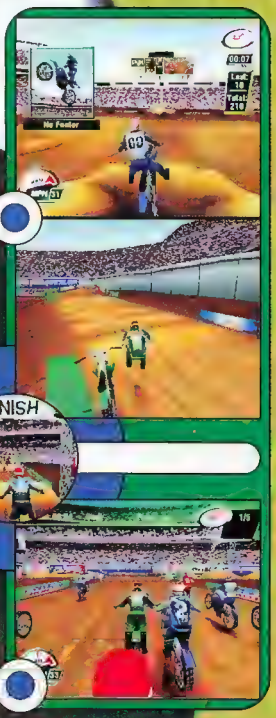
Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	MOTOCROSS
PUBLISHED BY:	EA
DEVELOPED BY:	MEL RESEARCH
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW

REVIEWED BY:
ALEX ANDREWS

SUPERCROSS 2000

EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



It's official. I've played and reviewed every motocross game available for the PlayStation, the latest being EA Sports Supercross 2000. You would think that they would get better as time passed, but sadly, that is not the case. When the supercross wars were heating up back at E3 in May of last year, the odds on favorite was the EA Sports title, with THQ and 989 vying for a closely fought second place. Now that the results are in, we couldn't have been more wrong. If you recall my reviews of the THQ and 989 games, I liked them both but they both had a handful of shortcomings that kept them off the "Editor's Choice" list. Not to cut my review short, but I can't find a reason to even RENT Supercross 2000.

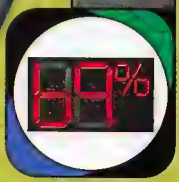
Let's start with the basics. Like most EA Sports titles, everything you could possibly expect is in this game. Licensed bikes, tracks and drivers, as well as multiple licensed sponsors. Your set up choices are enormous, quick races to quick freestyle to a season mode and, of course, bike customization. Once you settle in to your choices, things get real ugly, real fast. Let's start with the biggest offender. The control is horrific. In order to turn while accelerating, you have to take your foot off the gas. So, actually, you can't turn while accelerating. Extremely frustrating!!!!!!!! Additionally, the slightest movement of the analog stick while you're in the air and you're flying out of control. After a couple of tries, I started to finish in the top two in each race. It was just painful getting there. I remember when the representatives of one of the competing supercross games were in our offices showing us their game. They were very proud of it but were concerned that EA's game was so much better. They obviously hadn't played it yet because this game needs serious work. The frame rate runs along at a blistering 2 to 3 frames a second. Well, at least it seems that slow. In all fairness, however, there are 16 bikes on the track at once, which does account for the anemic pace. But geez louise, who cares how many bikes are on the track if the end result is a snail's pace?

It isn't all bad, however. The commentary is excellent, something that is seriously lacking in the other offerings (to the extent that it doesn't even exist). The graphics are so far ahead of anything else out there, you'd swear you were playing a 3D accelerated PC game. The artificial intelligence is outstanding as well. All bikes suffer from the same control issues and you can fall behind and still catch up. Collisions are very accurately represented and they happen out of view as well. There is also a track editor which allows you to create your own course; just don't expect it to change the outcome any. It's just nice, though, to be able to create a course that suits your tastes. Another thing that you don't see very often in a racing game is the fact that the modifications you make to your bike actually seem to have an impact on the bike's performance. I swear most developers just throw this option in to give you something to play with. Rarely, if ever, do the adjustments make any difference. The soundtrack is also a nice surprise as the rest have the typical mindless techno grunge crap. Unfortunately, however, this is all frosting and the cake collapsed in the oven.

BOTTOM LINE

Supercross 2000 comes in a distant third in the latest round of Supercross wars. The EA brand, undoubtedly will sell a number of these games, but if EA Sports expects to create a new franchise out of this title, they're sadly mistaking. This is definitely a rental only kind of a game.

SCORE:



COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ERIC WINDING

GENRE: BASKETBALL
PUBLISHED BY: KONAMI
DEVELOPED BY: KONAMI
ORIGIN: JAPAN
OF CD'S: 1
AVAILABLE: JANUARY

IN THE ZONE 2000

The hoops game that just won't go away...

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

After about twenty minutes with this game, my first thought was to find last years' review of NBA in the Zone 99 and submit that as my review for NBA in the Zone 2000. Of course, just enough has changed to keep me from doing that, but it's BARELY enough, let me tell you!

As for what is new — Konami ditched the "memorize this button sequence" dunk contest that was in ITZ 99 for a new dunking system that allows you to create the dunk "on-the-fly". This is done by first picking out where on the court you want to start, the camera angle, and then running. Hit the "jump" button to get airborne, and then fire off some button combos to get your dude to do a dunk. Sounds interesting enough, but what ends up happening is that your guy just kind of "floats" through the air, like the way a sprite would move across the screen when programmed by a guy with 5 minutes of BASIC programming knowledge. Sad, to say the least. Konami also claims that the 3D engine has been retooled to make the gameplay faster and the characters look better. Number one, it AIN'T faster, and number two, if the guys look any better, I couldn't tell and it certainly doesn't matter anyway.

Ok, so that's what's new, and the rest of what's in here is so below-average that it's hard to believe that the game is actually going to be released. Of course, it was released last year and the year before that, so I guess it's not actually a surprise. But who's buying this game? Can I see a show of hands? Is there anyone out there that still enjoys this series? If so, what do you like about it? Is it the tortoise-like frame rate? The chunky animations? Maybe it's the lack of a play-by-play guy. Sure, a lot of people don't really want to hear anybody call the action, so it's that "less is more" theory that you subscribe to. I can see that — less voice, less gameplay, less options, less animations, and certainly, the least amount of fun!

Let's start with the frame rate — it's beyond slow. You want to use a car analogy? How about "Yugo". It's really very pathetic — guys trudge down the court, and when the "turbo" button is held down, they simply bend their head, to make it look like they're going faster. Kinda like that fat lady you see walking and waving her arms up and down, like she thinks she is jogging. Next, there's the animations. Obviously, no pro worked too extensively doing the mo-cap for Konami, because the same ugly "throw it over your head" layup/hook shot (that has been in there for five years) is still in there. You know, the one where the guy jumps 1/2" off of the ground. It's a beauty. And, who could forget the famous "guys bumping into each other" animation that looks like a scene out of the Three Stooges? A joy to behold. Actually, the game would be kind of funny if they called it "Sfooge Basketball", and implied absolutely no NBA relationship whatsoever. It's obvious that no one over at Konami really cares about this franchise, as it stopped growing three years ago and has been in a downward freefall ever since.

SCORE:

64%

BOTTOM LINE

It's hard to believe that Konami can keep pumping out this type of junk. Throw it in the same laser bin as their hockey (Blades of Steel) and baseball titles (Bottom of the 9th). All of these games subscribe to the "neither meat nor cheese" theory (that is, it's not sim and it's not arcade), and that just doesn't cut it anymore. You've got to do one thing, and do it well, otherwise stick to Metal Gear Solid and leave the sports games to the people interested in doing them.

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

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- NCAA FinalFour 2000 basketball
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- NBA ShootOut 2000 mesh hoop shorts
- NBA ShootOut 2000 T-shirt

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The EXCAVATE section is where we dig up ratings from past issues and present them on one easy-to-read page, along with a little explanation/breakdown of our rating system. Use this as your buying guide throughout the year and as a reference for those older games that you might have missed (or wish you had).

PLATINUM GAMES	ISSUE	SCORE
Spyro 2 Ripto's Rage	December 1999	99%
Tony Hawk Pro Skater	November 1999	99%
Ape Escape	July 1999	98%
CTR: Crash Team Racing	November 1999	98%
Dino Crisis	October 1999	98%
Final Fantasy Anthology	October 1999	98%
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver	September 1999	98%
NFL GameDay 2000	October 1999	98%
Pac-Man World	September 1999	98%
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	November 1999	98%
Street Fighter Alpha 3	June 1999	98%
Wipeout 3	November 1999	98%

GOLD GAMES	ISSUE	SCORE
Croc 2	July 1999	97%
Final Fantasy VIII	October 1999	97%
Medal of Honor	December 1999	97%
NCAA GameBreaker 2000	October 1999	97%
Demolition Racer	November 1999	96%
Jade Cocoon	August 1999	96%
NBA Live 2000	December 1999	96%
Pong	December 1999	96%
Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time	August 1999	95%
Omega Boost	October 1999	95%
Star Ocean: Second Story	June 1999	95%
Fighter Maker	June 1999	94%
Grandia	November 1999	94%
WCW Mayhem	November 1999	94%
Madden NFL 2000	October 1999	93%
MLB 2000	June 1999	93%
NFL Blitz 2000	September 1999	93%
NHL FaceOff 2000	November 1999	93%
R-Type Delta	August 1999	93%
Sled Storm	October 1999	93%
WWF Attitude	October 1999	93%
Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete	July 1999	92%
NHL 2000	November 1999	92%
Rat Attack	December 1999	92%
Test Drive 6	December 1999	92%
Tiny Tank: Up your Arsenal	August 1999	92%
Warzone 2100	July 1999	92%
You Don't Know Jack	November 1999	92%
Baseball 2000	June 1999	91%
Cybertiger	December 1999	91%
Knockout Kings 2000	December 1999	91%
Tarzan	September 1999	91%
Ballistic	November 1999	90%
Driver	September 1999	90%
Echo Night	August 1999	90%
Um Jammer Lammy	September 1999	90%

SILVER GAMES	ISSUE	SCORE
Championship Motocross Featuring Ricky Carmichael	October 1999	89%
Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions	October 1999	89%
Rising Zan: The Samurai Gunman	September 1999	89%
Tail Concerto	October 1999	89%
International Track and Field 2000	December 1999	88%
NFL Xtreme 2	September 1999	88%
Supercross Circuit	December 1999	88%
Bass Landing	November 1999	87%
Castrol Honda Superbike Racing	July 1999	87%
NHL Championship 2000	November 1999	87%
Shadow Tower	December 1999	87%
Thousand Arms	November 1999	87%
Grand Theft Auto 2	December 1999	86%
Jet Moto 3	October 1999	86%
No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking	December 1999	86%
Ultimate 8 Ball	July 1999	86%
Chessmaster II	August 1999	85%
Gallop Racer	November 1999	85%
Hot Wheels Turbo Racing	October 1999	85%
RC Stunt Copter	October 1999	85%
Soul of the Samurai	September 1999	85%
Army Men: Air Attack	December 1999	84%
Chef's Luv Shack	December 1999	84%
Konami's '80's AC Special	September 1999	84%
Populous: The Beginning	June 1999	84%
Quake 2	December 1999	84%
Test Drive Off Road 3	November 1999	84%
Grand Theft Auto: London, 1969	June 1999	83%
NASCAR 2000	November 1999	83%
NBA Basketball 2000	November 1999	83%
NCAA Football 2000	October 1999	83%
Scrabble	November 1999	83%
Space Invaders	December 1999	83%
All Star Tennis '99	June 1999	80%
The Dukes of Hazzard	December 1999	80%

BRONZE GAMES	ISSUE	SCORE
Centipede	July 1999	79%
Juggernaut	September 1999	79%
Alexi Lalas International Soccer	August 1999	78%
The Phantom Menace	October 1999	78%
Chocobo Racing	September 1999	76%
High Heat Baseball 2000	July 1999	75%
Suikoden II	October 1999	75%
Touring Car Championship 2	December 1999	75%
Intellivision Classics	December 1999	74%
Sports Car GT	June 1999	74%
Xena: Warrior Princess	October 1999	74%
3Xtreme	June 1999	73%
G.Police 2: Weapons of Justice	October 1999	71%
Re-Volt	November 1999	71%
Killer Loop	December 1999	70%
Shadowman	November 1999	70%

TIN GAMES	ISSUE	SCORE
Dune 2000	November 1999	69%
South Park	December 1999	69%
Evil Zone	September 1999	41%

what do all those numbers mean?

98-100% The ultimate gaming experience.

90-97% "Must buy" games; each carries our editor's seal of approval and are recommended for fans of that genre.

80-89% Good games, but lacking in some area; only for fans of that style of game.

70-79% Mediocre titles that suffer from some serious flaws. Rent – don't buy.

0-69% Tin games are to be avoided at all costs. Only die-hard gamers would buy these.

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final word

David Jon Winding
Publisher

THE HOLIDAY DELUGE

Unless you are one of the very few people out there that read a magazine from back to front, you have probably just gone through our 50th issue... I hope you liked what you read. What does 50 issues mean? Well, to us it means over four years of fun, rewarding and hard (well, we're not laying bricks for a living, but putting a magazine to bed every 30 days is no easy task!) work. We started PSExtreme in October of 1995, as America's only monthly PlayStation magazine. Since then, we have had other competitors enter the marketplace but I believe that we have stayed true to our original vision; to produce a well-written and researched magazine that was about substance over hype and that would appeal to the adult male gamer. Here it is, four years later, and our average reader is still over 23 years of age. We are proud of what we've been able to accomplish over the past 50 issues and we plan on continuing to do so for another 50 and beyond. Of course, with the specter of PlayStation 2 looming, you can expect to see changes around here as well, but we will continue to stay focused on producing a quality publication for adult gamers. With that being said, I'd like to thank all of you that have read and supported PSExtreme over its first 50. In closing, I'd like to give you a little historical perspective on where we were as a culture, and what happened in the news, in October of 1995, when PSExtreme first appeared on newsstands.

THE TOON: On the Simpsons, Homer and the gang were trying to find out who shot Mr. Burns (Maggie did it!).

THE "LAWY": Everyone's favorite cut-up, OJ Simpson, was acquitted on charges that he murdered his wife, Nichole Brown-Simpson and Ron Goldman... Apparently, it didn't fit.

FILM: The number one movie at the box office was Disney's "Toy Story" (the sequel is currently doing huge at the box office... and it is on this very cover!)

SPORTS: Always the bridesmaids, the Atlanta Braves finally won the World Series.

Here we are, heading into the new millennium and the Simpsons are still going strong, OJ is still guilty, Toy Story 2 is #1 and the Braves are still going to the World Series. The more things change, the more they stay the same. Enjoy the new year and the new millennium and I hope you all have power on 1/1/00!

Dave
dwinding@quake.net

Next Issue

Volume 5 - Issue 3

in the issue

On the cover

Fear Effect

Issue #51 promises to light the newsstands on fire (well, not literally, because we'd probably get sued and then end up on Judge Judy or something) with plenty of burning, hot information that will singe your fingertips (again, not literally, 'cause then you'd be mad and probably a little gun-shy next time you went to pick up an issue). After reading it, you will think we are as cool as ice (if that was true, we'd pee freon) and only wish you lived down the block from us. Huh, you want to know what's in issue #51? Well, we've got an in-depth look at Eidos' Fear Effect, the latest PlayStation2 information, the remainder of the holiday reviews and all the rest of the good stuff you've come to expect from the fine folks at PSExtreme.

Excerpt

We talk to the makers of Crusaders of Might and Magic

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Gran Turismo 2

Special Feature

Spotlight on Capcom

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Fear Effect

Exclusive

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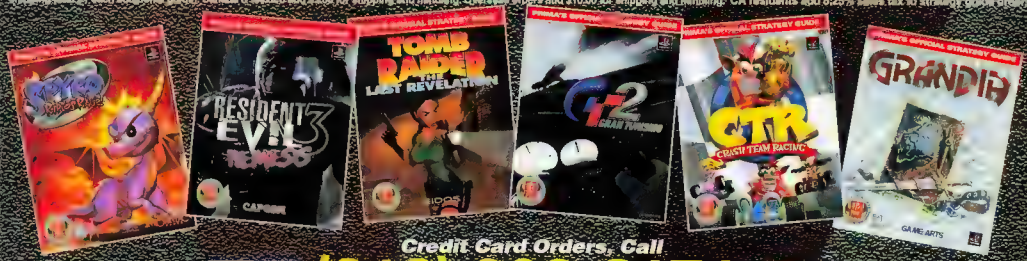

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MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

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